Shooting and fishing in the rivers, prairies, and backwoods of North America. By Benedict Henry Révoil ... Translated and revised by the Chronicler ...

SHOOTING AND FISHING IN THE RIVERS, PRAIRIES, AND BACKWOODS OF NORTH AMERICA.

BY BENEDICT HENRY RÉVOIL, (EDITOR OF THE “JOURNAL DE CHASSEURS”).

TRANSLATED AND REVISED BY THE CHRONICLER.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PAGE

SPORT IN NORTH AMERICA.

INTRODUCTORY. I.—THE NORTH AMERICAN FISHERIES.

I offer to my readers the cloak of Mephistopheles, and invite them to accompany me to the shores of North America, between the twenty-first and the fiftieth degrees of north latitude. Let them not be dismayed at the length of the journey; we shall have arrived at our destination in less time than it will take to read this first chapter. In these days of steam and electricity we travel quickly.

Good-bye, France! Welcome America! Land of the zealous sportsman, and above all, of the fisherman: land of great hunting and great fishing! Everything is on a large scale in that country, even the institutions, which seem however to have broken down of late, through a fatal neglect of the precepts of the immortal Washington. Lakes and rivers, forests, mountains, deserts, and even streams, all VOL. II. B 2 inspire respect, as the grandiose and magnificent never fail to do.

In my former volume I have mentioned the principal fauna, the methods of hunting the larger animals, and some of the more remarkable birds of the country; in the present one, I propose to describe the various modes of fishing practised on the rivers, and the innumerable bays on the shores of the Atlantic. The only merit of these pages will be their exactness. I am no fisherman, in the strictest sense of the word; and that is tantamount to an admission that I have no patience. Moreover, the art of fishing is a special gift, like that of fencing. Still, as a sportsman, I have killed fish with 'line, net, spear, and even with the gun, and in the course of my rambles through North America, I have taken great pleasure in listening to narrations of fishing feats, and have felt a desire to share in them. You must have taken part in such feats to understand the eccentric pleasure which they afford.

The quantity of fish which frequents the American 'coast is unlimited, and so is the liberty of fishing. There can be no poaching in America, for no one is denied the right of sporting. The only restriction is the custom, which is imposed by the laws of reproduction, to abstain during the breeding season. This custom is generally respected, and everybody of his own accord lays by his arms and weapons of destruction, 3 and waits patiently for the days consecrated to the reopening of the shooting and fishing season. I do not mean, of course, to assert that some will not be found who offend against this custom, but their number is small, and so great are the supplies of game of all sorts, four-footed, winged, and finny, that happily these effect but little mischief.

North America is a land of promise to the fisherman. It abounds in fish of all sorts, and of many which are unknown in Europe. My readers shall judge for themselves.

In the first place, there is the drumming fish (*Pogonias chromis*), so called from the noise which he makes in swimming, a noise which resembles that of drum-sticks beating on a drum. In calm weather and in the afternoon, you may hear this drumming at a distance of two hundred yards. The drumming fish is found near the coasts of the two Carolinas and Florida, and even in the Hudson, near New York. It is only during the season of reproduction that the fish indulges its musical propensities. The rest of the year it is silent,

and some have pretended that the sound is an amorous indication.* The drum fish is usually of large size; weighing from thirty-five to ninety pounds, and he B 2

* Sir John Richardson sought to explain the drumming by suggesting that the fish beat themselves against the bottoms of ships, to rid themselves of certain parasitic thread-worms which he found them constantly infested with.— Trans.

4 measures from a yard to a yard and a half long. The two sides of this eccentric fish are marked with broad black stripes, arranged in transverse lines alternating with ribands of gold and silver scales.

Some Charleston planters assured me that in one season they caught 12,000 drumming fish, which they salted and distributed among the poor of the country.

The devil or angel fish is another inhabitant of the American waters, and should have a chapter to himself.

The basse is one of the most succulent fish known. He varies in size from twenty to thirty inches in length, and his colour is iridescent from head to tail. He is a kind of sea perch, of an admirable form, and extremely active. Moreover, he is the most ravenous fish of that kind known.

Then, the musician fish. The *Sirens* of the ancients are not mythical, after all. I myself have touched and even eaten (in spite of the warning representations of a black) one of these harmonious mullets, and suffered no inconvenience from it.

One day, as I was returning to Talahassee from a hunting excursion in Florida, we were rowing along by the shore about sunset, when suddenly a strange, grave, and prolonged sound struck my ears. At first I thought it must be a drone, or fly of extra-ordinary magnitude; but, seeing nothing, I questioned my guide as to what it could be.

5

“Oh! massa,” replied he, “dat is de fish what sings. Some call it Syren or mermaid fish, and others musico.” A little way on, we heard a greater chorus of these strange voices, reminding me faintly of the music of church organs.

I stopped the canoe, the better to study this phenomenon; when, at my request, my sable oarsman threw a net into the water, and soon laid at the bottom of the boat about a score of little fish, each about ten inches long, resembling the grey mullet very closely in outward form. “Dese be mermaids, massa,” said the negro; “but in de name of hebben, don't eat dem.”

“Why not?” quoth I.

“Because they hab de lub poison.”

“Lub poison! And pray, what's that?”

“Yes, massa; when you eat one of dese fish, you fall so deep in lub, you can nebber get out again.”

I tried to laugh my black friend out of his notion, but in vain. In spite of what he said, however, I had my musicos fried that evening, and found, as I expected, that I was none the worse for the experiment.

The musician fish is white, with a few blue spots near the belly. It is about sun-set when these fish begin to sing, and they continue their music during the night, imitating the grave and sonorous droning of an organ, just as it reaches your ear when you stand outside a church. The presence of a 6 numerous audience does not seem to intimidate these little performers. Is it not strange? Is it not almost incredible? And yet nothing can be more true. The fact to which I here bear witness has been recorded in the *Annals of the Academy of Sciences.*

Another fish of which little is known is the squirting fish, which is found in Texas, and which can direct a drop of water upon its insect prey so as to bring it down into the water, where it falls an easy victim. This was how this curious fish was first discovered. A hunter was sleeping on the shore, when he was awakened by large drops of water falling upon his naked breast. On looking around, he found to his astonishment that the sky was clear and not a sign of rain. Whilst searching about for the cause of the phenomenon, he received a fresh discharge of water. Some flies were buzzing about him, and one of them alighted on his breast, just at the moment, he received a third jet. The Texan then began to examine minutely some curious little fish, of strange form and colour, which were swimming about quite close to the shore. They were about the size of large bleak, and when several of them raised their heads out of the water he received a fresh volley of drops. There could be no longer any doubt about the fact, the water had been squirted at him by the fish. The hunter being also a fisherman and his hut not very far off, he soon obtained a net 7 and caught a few of this strange fish. Placing them in a vessel of water he set over it a stick covered with treacle. The flies were soon attracted to perch upon this, and then each fish raising his head above the water discharged a drop of water at his fly with the most marvellous address, bringing them down into the vessel, where they soon fell victims to the squirting fish. The Texan hunter communicated his discovery to a naturalist at New Orleans, who verified the experiment, and the species was accepted as a novelty. This fish is, with good reason, accounted to be one of the best of the Mexican Gulf, and is now to be found all along the coasts of the Torrid Zone, in the waters of the South Atlantic, and also in the Pacific.

It is not only on the coasts of America that the fisheries are productive, but also in all the great lakes and rivers of North America. I take a pleasure in recalling to memory the happy days I spent on the banks of the Mississippi, the Hudson, the Ohio, and the St. Lawrence, not to mention the many great tributaries of those mighty streams. The very recollection of them restores their old elasticity to my limbs, vigour to my muscles, vivacity to my mind, and life to my heart. How lovely was the forest whose branchy summits shaded my head!

How clear the blue skies of that land on which Nature has lavished all her treasures! How harmonious were the notes of the mocking-bird and the 8 song-thrush! How ripe the fruits which I could gather everywhere around! Alas! the dream is vanished, and the reality finds me at Paris, seated before my old oak table inditing this preface of a dream—a dream which was the truth twelve years ago.

Among the fresh-water fish which abound in the great rivers of America, I would mention the cat fish, which weighs from one to one hundred pounds—a glutton by nature, and by no means nice in its choice of dainties. Like the vulture, he will content himself with garbage, when he can get nothing better; but the best bait to catch him with is certainly the toad. Those who go out to fish for him always lay in, therefore, a good stock of toads, and by baiting them upon snoods fixed upon a trot-line of a hundred and twenty to two hundred yards long, they catch quantities of this fish. The toad impaled upon the hook jumps about in the water and forms a most attractive bait for these water-gluttons. The trotline is laid in the morning and taken up in the middle of the day, and again at night; so that often the take is very considerable.

There are several species of cat fish in the North American rivers; above all, the Blue, the White, and one the colour of mud. These differ as much in their habits as in their colour. The flesh of the last-named is the best, but it rarely attains the size of the others. The blue fish is the biggest, and when 9 it is not larger than from four to six pounds it is not bad eating. The white is better and not so common. Cat fish are often taken up to a hundred and twenty pounds weight; but such fish are unusual.

The shape of the cat fish is that of a cone. Its head is disproportionately large, and tapers down to the tail. *Desinit in piscem.* The eyes, which are small and very wide apart, are placed in the front of the head. The jaws are very wide, and furnished with a formidable array of sharp teeth, and are moreover defended by tusks which, when the fish is in the agonies of death, are elevated at right angles, and cannot be depressed. The cat fish has

also long cirri or barbels of proportionate length, which aid it in finding its way about along the bottom of the water, whilst its eyes keep a look out for what is going on overhead.

I remember, one evening, on the banks of the Hudson, near Hastings, having laid a trot-line, I determined to remain until midnight with two friends to ascertain the results of our fishing. Every now and then I tried the line to ascertain whether anything was on, and about ten o'clock it seemed to me that the resistance had greatly increased. I was not mistaken; for drawing the line carefully ashore I found on it an enormous cat fish of twenty-three pounds weight. It was quite a monster, and on opening it I found not only the toad which had served for bait, but a handsome white perch, which 10 it had swallowed just before the batrachian, for it was as fresh as if it had just been taken from the Hudson. We ate the perch and divided the cat fish, which made capital stews.

The white perch* which I have just mentioned, is one of the best fishes of the North American rivers and lakes. To fish for it is one of the favourite sports of the urban anglers, who go to celebrate their Sundays far away from the towns, to escape from the dilemma of being forced to go to church or be pointed at by the finger of scorn. On fine Sundays, the banks of the Hudson, about ten miles from New York, are lined with anglers come to enjoy the pleasures of a day's perch-fishing.

* This fish is called by some fishermen the “grumbler,” from the noise which it makes in water under the bottom of a boat,—a kind of hoarse murmur; which sounds like a growl. This grumbling peculiarity is very odd. if you make the slightest noise against the bottom of the boat, as by tapping, it ceases immediately; but as soon as all is quiet again, it recommences. It is only heard, moreover, when the weather is fine. The white perch is from fifteen to twenty inches long; but I have seen them occasionally much larger, up to four and even six pounds. Six weeks after they return to the rivers, their flesh acquires a dazzling whiteness; but during the summer heats the fish grows thin, and loses its decided sea-water flavour.

Watch them carefully. There is not a breath of air to cause a ripple on the stream; the air is clear, and the water is troubled neither by waves nor by fish-frightening steamboat. Every fisherman has with him a basket containing some crabs or cray fish, the favourite bait for "the grumblers." The 11 crustacean is impaled by thrusting the hook through him, from a point above the tail up to his head, so as to leave his claws at liberty. The line is then thrown into the water, and when it has reached the bottom, it is gently drawn onwards by the current, and soon follows the direction of the stream. As soon as a fish bites, the fisherman strikes and draws the line in, and in a twinkling the fish is pulled from his native element and lies panting on the sandy shore. What a lovely fish! What silvery scales, variegated with a greenish iridescence! What brilliant eyes! This kind of fishing is one which you may soon take a fancy to, and in a couple of hours the fortunate fisherman may catch a hundred weight of fish.

I have mentioned the cray fish, and they deserve a more special description. There are two sorts in the United States; one resembling the European species, and the other a variety which is peculiar to North America. The latter is called the *gri-gri* , a familiar name bestowed upon it by the negroes of the South. The *gri-gri* is larger than the freshwater cray fish; it frequents the land more than the water, and usually digs a hole for itself in the damp soil. It is like an ogre who digs a grave to live in himself, and waits there for the corpse which is to furnish him with a dinner. And this is no figure of speech; it is really the case. The *gri-gri* digs its hole more or less deep, according to the character 12 of the soil. It remains in its domicile all day, often exposed to the rays of the sun; but as soon as night comes, it sallies out "seeking whom it may devour." If the soil be firm, the hole is only a few inches deep; but if soft, it will sometimes be from two to three feet. It is then no longer a hole but a burrow, and to draw the *gri-gri* from thence a string is required, with a morsel of carrion at the end of it—when this is dropped in, it is the corpse which was waited for. Crack! The *gri-gri* pounces on its prey, but is forthwith drawn out gently and pouched by the fisherman without further ceremony.

The cleverest *gri-gri* fisher is the white ibis of Texas and Louisiana. It advances very quietly, demolishes the heap of dirt around the habitation of the *gri-gri* , and fills up the cavity with the rubbish. He then retires softly, and waits patiently until the *gri-gri* comes forth to repair the mischief; where-upon, Master Ibis seizes him in his beak and bolts him in a twinkling. Which is the more ingenious,—man or the ibis? Before quitting the subject, I would testify that the flesh of the *gri-gri* is delicious, and resembles somewhat that of the European crawfish;* but alas! they are mostly to be found

* To the English, who usually prefer the lobster to the crawfish (*Palinurus vulgaris*), this may seem no very high compliment; but many French epicures give the palm to the latter crustacean, which they call *la langouste.* Those who have eaten the delicate and flavolarous crawfish of the Bay of Biscay, will not be disposed to differ very widely from this judgment.— Trans.

13 in the neighbourhood of dirty drains and cemeteries.

I must not forget the American lobster, which abounds in such quantities that it is a considerable article of food, not only with the wealthy, but even with the poor. An enormous lobster may be had at from eightpence to tenpence—sometimes almost for nothing. Both lobster and crab are delicious; the latter, especially at the time when it changes its carapace, is one of the daintiest dishes possible. The Americans fry them in this state, and eat them entire, claws and all, and they are as tender as possible.

The province of New Brunswick has the credit of being the most *fishy* district in all North America. Probably it is the vast variety of the sea-weeds which grow upon its coasts, and of the river-plants that line the beds of its fresh-water streams, that tempts the scaly tribe to that country so beloved of all fishermen. Here are found salmon, sturgeon, basse (*Perca labrax*)—a fish which is much prized by epicures,—caplin, shad, trout, eels, gudgeon, whitebait, carp, tench, &c., with other varieties not even known to Audubon or Wilson.

Salmon-fishing, as practised by the Red Skins of New Brunwick, is a delightful pastime. As soon as the fish make their appearance in the waters of the Nashwack, the waters of the river are ploughed nightly by numerous canoes, each carrying in the prow a lighted torch of pine wood. Two Indians 14 are in each canoe, one paddling, and the other holding a harpoon in his hand. The torch sheds a bright light ahead, and with attentive eye the harpooner watches the favourable moment when the fish, attracted by the flame, shows its back above the surface of the water. At that moment he is transfixed. The cord which holds the harpoon is uncoiled, and the canoe is sometimes dragged along the rapids. What matters it? The Red Skins are marvellously dexterous, and despise all kinds of danger. What they propose to themselves to do, they mostly accomplish, and the fish seldom fails to be shared between the two partners.

The sturgeons of New Brunswick are of monstrous size, often attaining to a length of ten or twelve feet. It is interesting to see them leaping and plunging over the rapids, mounting from one level to another. There is a tradition that one morning a sturgeon, leaping in this way, jumped into the bark canoe of an Indian squaw, who was known among her familiars as “Molly Greenbaize.” The good woman, without losing her presence of mind, threw herself on the fish, lying over him at full length, and by paddling with her hands over the side of the frail skiff, managed to get both it and the fish safely to shore.

Trout are very abundant in the United States, in all the rivers, in the clear waters of the lakes, and the deep holes of the streams. The urban sportsmen 15 there who are familiar with Isaac Walton, and who can put his precepts into practice, use rod and line, and artificial flies. The Indians employ more primitive means, which succeed quite as well, if not indeed better than those which have been invented by civilization. In winter, when it freezes, they cut a hole in the ice, sweep it clear of the *dédris,* and drop a bait into the hole, which the trout rise at greedily. The best kind of trout known is that of the river Redhead, and the peculiar flavour of this fish is attributed to the sea-water which mingles with it to a considerable distance above the mouth during the high tides. Among the other

localities most sought after is Loch Lomond, beneath the Bald Mountains, and the river Masquash, in the same neighbourhood.

The basse mounts the great rivers from the sea, especially during the winter, preferring the quiet of the lakes and rivers to the troubles of a life in the Atlantic. He stays in the fresh water until spring, and there “makes his fat.” Basse have been taken in the rivers of New Brunswick up to thirty or forty pounds weight, but the ordinary weight is from one to six pounds. In the Richibucto and the Gemseg, minor rivers in the same state, basse are fished for sometimes by the line in the way of bottom-fishing, and sometimes by large nets set under the ice, and drawn up every now and then. Net fishing is very destructive, and in illustration 16 of this, I will narrate an anecdote which will bring this chapter to a conclusion.

I am about to introduce to my readers an historic individual, whose career, however, is very little known on this side of the Ocean. This individual is a woman, still young, although eighteen years have elapsed since the incident took place which I am about to relate.

About the middle of the year 1843, there arrived in Washington, from Europe, an admirable creature, aged seventeen, beautiful as Venus, whose charms indeed she seemed to have borrowed. She had lovely blue eyes and golden hair. One might have taken her for one of Titian's beauties, or for one of those charming goddesses or nymphs which adorn the canvas of Rubens.

A descendant of Amerigo Vespucci, who had the honour of bestowing his name upon the two Americas, the beautiful America Vespucci had come, an orphan and penniless, to claim from Congress a pension which would enable her to restore the position of her house and revive the historic fame of her ancestors.

Unfortunately for America, the Yankees have little taste for giving away anything. The Italian beauty lost her cause with the representatives of the “free people,” but she was more fortunate with an English Croesus, who offered her his heart, and the shelter of a

seignorial domain on the banks of Lake 17 Ontario, not far from Rochester. At seventeen years of age flesh is weak, above all when the tempter is a handsome youth. Mr. P. was a millionaire of the Antinous type, and America, disappointed of her pension from Congress, accepted his offer. The only drawback was that Antinous was as jealous as Othello.

America, however, gave him no cause for apprehension in that direction. Her principal amusements were hunting and fishing. She was to be seen hunting the stag, shooting partridges, snipe, quail, and all the fowls of the air and the waters. A veritable Isaak Walton in petticoats, she threw her line over every stream which flowed into Ontario.

The reputation of her beauty attracted to Mr. P.'s country-house a large number of visitors; but all, under one pretext or another, were speedily sent about their business, often without even an opportunity of presenting to the master of the house their letters of introduction, and without being found worthy of a single glance, even were it of disdain, from the eyes of the fair America. The residence of Mr. P. soon came to be talked about in all the best Clubs of the Union as an inaccessible Eden, guarded by the dragons of the Hesperides; and the greater the difficulty was to approach the feet of the fair America, the greater the number of the Argonauts who desired to approach that incomparable Golden Fleece.

Chance had brought me into contact with Mr. P., VOL. II C 18 and I had an opportunity of rendering him some slight service. So one day, finding myself near Rochester, on my return from Canada, I determined to present myself at Lake Manor. The servant who opened the door told me that his master received no one; but I desired him in a peremptory tone to take in my card, and he did so. Within five minutes Mr. P. came to the door himself, offering me his hand with a gracious smile, and assuring me of the pleasure which it gave him to receive me at his home.

“You must spend some time with us now; as long as ever you please. Nothing will give me greater pleasure.”

“Thank you, my dear P.,” I replied, “but I am only a bird of passage: indeed, a carrier-pigeon, bearing news to my editor-in-chief.”

“Nonsense; he must wait. Write and tell him that you will stay a fortnight here.”

“Impossible.”

“Well, then, a week?”

“It cannot be: but still—”

“Ah! come in, then. Let me send for your baggage and introduce you to America.” Whereupon Mr. P. led the way into a splendid drawing-room, where I found, lounging gracefully on a settee covered with poppy-coloured satin, the incomparable America. She was dressed in white muslin, exquisitely embroidered—a work of the fairies—and 19 bade me welcome in the sweetest voice I ever heard. I thought I was transported into some other planet, a paradise of angels.

I have no intention of wearying my readers with all the details of the delights of this Capua, where I ultimately stayed a fortnight. Knowing my fondness for sport, Mr. P. and America exhausted their ingenuity to invent every day some new pleasure of this kind.

One evening, after supper, the conversation turned upon trout-fishing. On one side of the princely domain of Mr. P. was a rapid stream, which rushed down in cataracts towards the lake. The depths below each fall were reservoirs of trout, which frequently attained there the most gigantic proportions. I had seen some of them of at least five-and-twenty pounds weight, served upon Mr. P.'s table, and their flavour had astonished me quite as much as their size.

Next morning, after breakfast, my hosts of Lake Manor and myself, proceeded to the spot in an elegant open *char-à-banc,* which America herself drove with admirable skill and

grace. She was attired in a dress well fitted for a sportswoman,—short petticoats, very wide trousers, strong boots, and a jacket which would have been called a *Zouave* if the fashion had been known in those days.

We alighted at a place where the stream fell at least twenty feet into a natural basin, whose borders C 2 20 were carpeted with moss, blue periwinkle, and orchids. The surface of the water was constantly disturbed by fish coming up to breathe the air, or to snap up an insect. By the orders of Mr. P., lines had been brought to the place, with several kinds of nets. We all first of all tried our skill with the artificial fly, but I must confess that I was too much occupied with watching America to pay much attention to what I was doing. She, however, set about her task in earnest, and the trout were soon heaped up at her feet, in a reservoir net which she arranged herself at the margin of the basin.

Mr. P. had gone on to try another pool, when America said to me: “I see the line-fishing wearies you. Let me show you how to use the casting net. I elect you my boatman ordinary and extraordinary.”

“ *You* use the casting net?”

“Certainly, and very well too. *E voi vedrete la mia abilità.* ”

“That I can well believe, and yet.—”

“Well, get into the boat, and row it gently down the stream. Make as little noise as possible.”

There was an elegant little canoe, which we both entered, she standing at the prow with her net thrown over her shoulders, and presently (swinging it two or three times) she threw it into the water in a circle—no practised fisherman could have done it better. The cast was so successful that I had to come to the assistance of my joyous companion. 21 Within the meshes of the casting net we found seven enormous trout, nine smaller ones, an eel, and

a six pound salmon. America clapped her hands, and called out for Mr. P. to come and partake of her joy, which was that of a child. He was soon with us, and had been equally successful with his fishing. The total catch for the day was forty-five trout, of which eleven weighed from eight to nine pounds, fifteen eels, over a hundred gudgeons, three smallish salmon, and nineteen basse.

The day after this extraordinary take I was compelled, by an imperative letter from my editor, to choose between my immediate return or retirement from my engagement. My friend, who had no great liking for the celebrated James Gordon Bennett, the chief editor and proprietor of the *New York Herald* (of whom I was then the liegeman), wished me to adopt the latter alternative; but the necessity for work was too strong for me, and I had to take leave sorrowfully of my amiable hosts.

Many a time since my return to France, have I inquired of Americans for news of my friends of Lake Manor, but without hearing anything of them. Should these lines ever come under the eyes of America and Mr. P., I hope they will remember that they have in Paris a friend who has not forgotten them.

22

II.—LINE-FISHING.

I am convinced that the perusal of *Robinson Crusoe,* the *Swiss Robinson,* and the works of Cooper, Mayne Reid, and other authors of the same kind—of even my own, it may be—has attracted from the paternal roof many of our most celebrated sailors, and that it will continue to produce the same effect as often as occasion offers, but I am still more certain that the greater part of the anglers who line the banks of the Seine, the Marne, and the other great rivers of the world, have been inspired with the “fatal” passion by reading fishing manuals, and works which promise to teach the devotees of the gentle art how to catch large quantities of fish in a short time,—works which develope the theory without paying due attention to the practice, and which serve up their lessons with an

accompaniment or sauce composed of anecdotes, stories of marvellous takes of fish, and often of exciting illustrations.

I, who wrote this, good fellow angler, read my Walton years ago—alas, how many!—with three companions of my own age; and at the conclusion of that captivating reading, we started off at once for a certain small lake not far from the paternal mansion, duly furnished with rods, lines, hooks, red worms, and morsels of cheese—like true Quixotes as we 23 were in the art of fishing. The season was propitious. Spring was beginning to melt into summer, and a warm breeze, perfumed with sage, thyme, and lavender, freshened our foreheads and played with our curly locks. I speak of myself as from afar, and my readers will understand the pleasure I take in thinking of what I then was, as we ran on to abridge the distance between my father's house and the lake of Baux.

One of us—I see him as if it were yesterday—had accoutred himself after a fashion equally artistic and picturesque. He had dressed himself in a serge coat, which was cut in the shape of a long waistcoat, with large pockets before and behind; his legs were encased in wading boots, and he held in one hand a creel, to contain the fish he intended to catch, and in the other a fishing-rod and reel, and a landing-net. The good people whom we met on the road looked with amazement, as if they could not understand why M. Max de C. (whom they all knew well) should dress himself up like a play-actor. In their eyes, he produced just the same effect that the hero of La Mancha did upon the knights of the Sierra Morena, when he appeared before them all cased in iron, his helmet on his head, and his lance in rest.

We soon arrived at the brink of the lake, which bathed with its clear waters a tuft of green oaks, whose foliage offered us a shelter against the fervour 24 of the southern sun. At a short distance from the spot which we had chosen for our first attempt at the gentle sport, a clear rivulet flowed into the pond from the mountains of La Yacquière, as if to warm its icy streams in the warmer waters of the lake. Often with one of my uncles had I visited this place in search of water-hens and snipe. It was, in fact, an excellent place for water-fowl,

and from the occasional disturbance of the surface of the water, it was easy to see that there were fish lurking down below among the roots of the aquatic vegetation.

I had forgotten to state that, without being at the time acquainted with the sporting maxims of du Fonilleux (whose curious pages I have since read), we had brought with us a sufficient quantity of “mouth tackle,” in order that we might enjoy the pleasures of a breakfast *al fresco.* Before attacking the victuals, however, it was determined upon that we should fish; so to fish we prepared forthwith.

Max was the first to cast his line into the water. Myself and the others had to put our primitive tackle in order, and awkward enough we were about it, you may be sure. All, however, was finally arranged to the satisfaction of everybody.

Max was lucky enough. He had soon captured two tench and a little carp, when Gabriel (friend number two) cast his line into a corner of the mouth of the rivulet, and drew out successively 25 several carp, tench, and an eel. The rest of us now made haste to join in the sport, and at last I threw my bait into the water, arranged, as I thought, with admirable art. At first, fortune smiled upon my efforts, and I soon added to the basket three perch and a small pike, and then—luck turned against me.

I must confess, to my shame, that I am somewhat of a poacher, and fond as I am of net-fishing, line-fishing has but few attractions for me, principally because it is so often without result. Moreover I had not then sufficient adroitness to manage the tackle. Often I hung up my hook in the endeavour to recover it for the purpose of changing the bait. Then my line got entangled in the branches of a tree; finally, I broke the top of my rod, and grew out of patience. Disgusted with my own want of skill, I gave it up in despair, and, throwing myself on the mossy bank at the foot of the oaks, contented myself with watching my three friends.

We breakfasted at mid-day, and after a short rest the fishing re-commenced, and when evening had come the basket was so heavy, that we had to obtain the assistance of a countryman to carry it home for us.

Next morning, we returned to the spot; but this time I renounced the rod and line, and had provided myself with a spear, which, thanks to the lessons which I had received from a well-known 26 poacher in the village, I knew how to manage. In a short time, I managed to land several fine eels upon the bank, and my success gave me so much heart, that I worked hard with my spear all day, and by the evening was proclaimed “king of the day,” an honour which Max had divided the day before with one of our friends. Happy memories! Reminiscences of the past, fled, alas! too soon.

Here is another *souvenir* connected with line-fishing which relates to my journeys in the New World. One morning I was walking out about sunrise along the banks of Fordham's Brook, near the Croton Aqueduct, in the neighbourhood of New York, when my attention was attracted by a fisherman who was accompanied by two companions of strange appearance; the first, who seemed to be giving the others instruction in the art of fishing, was an old soldier of Washington's army,—a relic of a noble band that performed prodigies of valour, and it was easy to guess, by the state of his clothes, that he was a man of careful and economical habits. A large scar divided his right cheek, and gave a hard expression to his face; but on looking closer, it was easy to see that the bottom was better than the surface. A smile softened the angles of his lips, and his grey locks descended in silky curls behind his cars, which were ornamented with earrings, according to the old fashion. In a word, this fisherman seemed to me disposed to take the world as it was, 27 and to hook as many fish as he could during the day.

The individual to his right was one of those Irishmen who are called in New York “Jacks of all trades”—or, as the Italians have it, *tutte sorti di mestieri* —poacher, bully, smuggler, trapper, and (occasionally) grave-digger. The third was what they call in New York a “ *b'hoy* ”—a fellow who has no business but that of doing nothing. Lean, sly, and idle-

looking, with haggard eyes and neglected garments; black coat and vest, shirt of a doubtful tint; coloured necktie, and his hat cocked on one side.

The veteran of 1777 was gravely occupied in examining the contents of the stomach of a salmontrout which he had just captured, and was endeavouring to ascertain, from what he found there, what were the insects most sought after by the fish. He was giving a lesson to his companions, who seemed very attentive to what he said to them. I myself listened respectfully to his discourse, and resolved to follow in his wake, admiring greatly the address with which he fished across the stream, avoiding all contact with the bushes. He threw his fly into the best places, drawing it across the surface of the stream, and letting it float sometimes into a deep hollow under the roots of a tree, and sometimes under the shelter of the bank—likely places for the big trout to lie in. As he proceeded, the fisherman explained to his two pupils how to hold the rod, how 28 to tie on the flies, and how to throw them so as to attract the fish to rise at them.

A few days before this, I had been reading a few chapters of Isaak Walton, and the scene recalled to me the picture of the sage Piscator and his pupil. The surrounding country, too, reminded me strongly of that described by the Angler-poet.

Let the reader imagine a deep valley, not far from the fine mansion inhabited by the Jesuits of Fordham College, shaded by the leafy trees which clothe the sides of the slopes which mount up towards the Catskill mountains, and lead onwards to the green and balmy prairies of Connecticut.

Walton describes somewhere in his work the charms of a day lit up by a bright sun, whose heat is now and then tempered by a light rain that gems the grass with myriads of diamonds.

I advanced towards the group and entered into conversation with the old fisherman, who received me most kindly, and so interested me with his conversation that I remained the whole day with the party, wandering along the Fordham rivulet, and lending an

attentive ear to the discourse of my Piscator. That master of the art of fishing was most communicative, and talked volubly—as light-hearted old men do. Moreover, he took an evident pride in proving that no one understood better than he the art of hooking and landing a fish according to rule.

He took a pleasure in recounting to me the adventures 29 of his youth; the battles of the War of Independence in which he had taken part, and above all, the celebrated fight of Bunker's Hill, where a cannon ball had grazed his leg and carried away a piece of flesh without touching the bone. Several other wounds had placed it out of his power to earn a livelihood, and Washington himself had provided for him a protection against want by obtaining for him a pension of three hundred dollars, which the State paid every three months.

Daniel Tucker—that was the name of the old warrior—had retired to a cottage near Haarlem, and lived there in a very simple style, giving himself up heart and soul to his fondness for fishing. He knew his Walton by heart, and seemed to have imbibed from that author a wealth of good humour and frankness which pervaded his whole character and person. I soon found out that it was proper to address friend Daniel by no other name than “Dan.”

The *b'hoy,* as I afterwards learnt from Dan, was the son and heir-presumptive of a widow of sixty years old, who kept a small public-house at Mac-Comb's Dam, and who was reputed to be worth a little money. Dan, who always found a seat ready for him in the tap-room, and a gratuitous glass of ale (by reason of the fact that the widow's husband had been a comrade), looked after the young Bohemian, and took a pleasure in having him to accompany him 30 on his fishing excursions. Thus, he not only discharged a duty to friendship, but enjoyed an opportunity of satisfying a very natural vanity, by proving in a practical manner his acquaintance with an art in which he was really skilled.

Line-fishing is an art. The Americans are as fond of it as the English are, and it affords them an amusement which harmonises well with the cultivated regularity of the two countries, where the fields are arranged in order, the country quiet, the foliage bushy, but without being encumbered too much by those brambly barriers which are so fatal to the integrity of fishing lines. Yes, line-fishing is a charming art, and the quiet watchfulness which it necessitates tempts you, without knowing it, into a reverie which is interrupted only by the carol of a bird, the song of a peasant, or the plash of a fish jumping out of the water, and leaving a ripple for a few seconds upon the surface. And then what pleasure is there in store for the angler who is also a botanist, when he can take home with him his basket filled with fish, and an enormous bouquet made up of the variegated aquatic flora,—narcissus, orchids, lilies of many colours, nympheas, purple hyacinths, violets and anemones. With these, you may adorn a feast, the second course of which has been provided at small expense,—the salmon trout and the milky-roed carp.

When I said good-bye to Dan Tucker, I asked 31 him to give me his address and permission to call upon him. He consented readily, thanking me for my politeness, and a few days afterwards, having got over my lecture on French literature at Fordham College in good time, I set off on foot to hunt up my disciple of Isaak Walton.

Dan lived in a pretty cottage at the further end of the village of Haarlem. His house, which consisted of two large rooms, was situated in the midst of a garden, the beds of which contained a mixture of the useful and the agreeable,—vegetables mingled with flowers. A large honeysuckle adorned the front of the cottage, and the sides were covered with ivy and climbing roses.

The front room of the cottage was simply furnished, but with a degree of taste that might well have passed for luxury. Over the old-fashioned chimney, which was large enough to shelter a regiment of friends, the old soldier had arranged a trophy of muskets belonging to Washington's time,—sabres, swords, Indian tomahawks, and bows and arrows, the whole surmounted by one of the head-dresses worn by the Red Skins, made of otter's fur and

adorned with eagle's feathers. On a kind of pedestal surrounded by palm-leaves stood a plaster statue of Washington, simple and dignified, on the brow of which Dan had placed a crown of *immortelles.* On the whitewashed walls, and in maple frames, were strange lithographs of rude drawing and homely 32 execution, the only merit and pretension of which were to illustrate the campaigns of the heroes of American Independence. I must not forget to mention, however, a trophy of fishing implements, consisting of everything that an experienced fisherman could require, and all arranged in the most perfect order. The furniture of this room consisted of an oak table, an arm-chair with a tall back, two rocking-chairs, and four wooden stools. In the centre of the table stood a stoneware vase filled with aquatic flowers; on one side, a Bible covered with blue paper to preserve the shagreen binding, and on the other, a few newspapers piled over each other. The other room was the bed-room.

Dan Tucker's family consisted of a dog, a vigilant fellow who looked after the cottage when his master was absent, and whose usual seat was on the threshold of the front door. Tom always announced a visitor by a bark, but he showed a formidable set of teeth at the same time, unless Dan told him to be quiet, in which case he obeyed instantly. This is what happened when I paid my visit. Dan soon pacified Tom, who had never seen me before, and invited me to come in.

I found the fisherman seated on a bench near his door, enjoying his pipe, Tom lying at his feet on a straw mat placed for that purpose. Tucker had been out fishing all day, and narrated to me all his exploits with as much gusto as if he had returned 33 from a grand sporting expedition. He grew quite animated in telling me how he had managed to land au enormous trout, which had called for the exercise of all his skill, and which he had presented to Mrs. Slocum, the excellent hostess of the Haarlem inn.

I learnt at Haarlem that Dan Tucker was the favourite of the village and the oracle of all the taprooms round, charming his audiences by his stories of their country's glory, and by the songs which he sang with a true and sympathetic voice. He was also in great request at

some of the villas of the wealthier merchants, where, by way of recompense for lessons in angling given to the lads, he was often invited to take his seat at the table and enjoy a glass of good port or sherry.

Friend Dan led a life free from trouble, happy and calm. When the weather was fair, he lived from morn till night on the banks of the neighbouring streams and rivers; and in winter he was fully occupied in preparing, by the side of his coal fire, his fishing-tackle for the coming season, and in inventing new kinds of flies calculated to tempt the craftiest trout.

Every Sunday, Dan went to Haarlem Church, but he usually fell asleep during the sermon of the venerable pastor, who pardoned him, however, for this little breach of decorum, for he respected this old relic of the War of Independence. Dan had bargained with him to be buried under the grass-covered VOL. II D 34 hillock beneath which his father and mother had reposed for many years.

And so ends this preliminary chapter of a series of fishing sketches. It seemed to me that this picture of the American fisherman was a good example to humanity, for, according to the precepts of old Isaak, he was Virtue's friend, trusted in Providence, had a tranquil spirit, and *only fished with a line.*

III.—THE FISHING-EAGLE OF SARATOGA SPRINGS.

One evening, by one of the finest moonlights that ever illuminated the giant banks of the Hudson, I got on board one of those floating mansions which navigate that great water-way of the United States, setting out on my mission as a journalist to visit that fashionable watering-place where all the beaux and belles of New York (especially those who are called in good Saxon the *Cod-fish aristocracy* —in allusion to the way in which the majority of their fortunes have been made) are accustomed to congregate. I need scarcely say that I spent as much of the night as possible upon deck, and only sought my berth after smoking a good many prime Havannahs. 35 When I awoke, we were at Albany, and it was five in the morning. The river-fogs were still contending for mastery with the rays of the

rising sun, and half-awakened Nature spread before me a scene which must ever be new in spite of every attempt to render it familiar by description. We found the town fast asleep, but in the environs a few country-houses began to be stirring, and at the Window appeared rosy faces yet slightly Veiled by the traces of slumber.

At West Troy, I crossed the Hudson by the ferryboat—an embarkation which moved quite independently of steam. Two horses, shut up in a drum-shaped box upon the deck, supplied the motive power to this primitive construction. These unhappy quadrupeds, condemned to perpetual motion without progress, move beneath their feet a moveable platform, the bottom of which turns round in the water. It is the screw reduced to its simplest form. During our short passage we had leisure to examine the two halves of Troy situate on either bank of the river; the vessels moored to the quays, the roofs of the houses grouped together in masses, and the factory chimneys which soar up from the midst, all denoting a very populous, active, and industrious town.

When the boat touched the opposite bank, the railroad awaited us—that tyrant, which grants the travellers such short respites, and which barely even allows you the time needful to swallow the semblance D 2 36 of a breakfast. Without wishing too much harm to the directors, I must say that the railway from Troy to Whitehall is one of the worst managed lines that ever made a traveller uncomfortable. It is true that they send to fetch you from the very door of your hotel, but the time thus saved is amply repurchased by the carelessness with which your luggage is packed, and the utter want of caution manifested throughout. When you arrive at your destination, you must scramble for your goods and chattels, or have the satisfaction of seeing them carried away to the next station, or (worse still!) whipt off by one of those industrious gentry against whom you are constantly put on your guard by the official notice—“Beware of pickpockets.”

However, when at Rome you must do as Rome does. We start for Saratoga, and the train, plunging through an immense covered bridge which crosses the Hudson, bounds across three arms of the Mohawk river successively. After that, the country assumes

a new aspect, which it preserves throughout the remainder of the journey. Man has no longer entire possession of the vast domain. Fragments of forest still remain standing, and half-finished clearings alternate with land carefully cultivated. Occasionally, we pass a valley which contains a sprinkling of white houses, and on the approach to Saratoga a vast and lively panorama displays itself before you to the right. Then the train stops, casts you forth bag and 37 baggage under a kind of shed, and resumes its noisy career. You are at Saratoga.

At first sight, Saratoga has nothing to distinguish it from other country towns in the United States. You see a large town of wooden houses, and streets lined with trees, built partly in the end of a small valley and partly up the side of the hill. In the middle, there is a Broadway of shops, and on each side pavementless streets, which lose themselves in the neighbouring fields or woods. In a word, nothing remarkable, nothing exceptional.

Presently, however, you begin to recognise by certain signs that there is something remarkable about the town. You seek in vain for the indications of some special commerce or manufacture, and look around in vain for mills or factories. At the station there are no waggons for bales of goods, nor is there any sound of industry, that unmistakeable symptom of a busy or commercial people. In point of fact, Saratoga has nothing to sell but its mineral waters, and derive all its fortune from the fashion which attracts people to them.

As soon as you have thus brought yourself to look into matters more closely, you have no difficulty in recognising the symptoms of a place frequented by pleasure-seekers. The numerous hotels are evidently beyond the normal requirements of such a place. Then there are the idleness, the air of strangeness, and the elegant attire of those who 38 promenade the streets with slow and indolent steps; the rich display in the shops, and finally, the equipages standing in front of the doors or rolling along the streets, contrasting with and shaming the equipages of the country folk.

The traveller who passed through Saratoga without looking closely into it, would be apt to imagine that it was a large village, deriving its existence from some neighbouring industry; but to the man who passes even two hours in its streets, Saratoga bears all those signs of *ennui* , and even of disorder, which infallibly distinguish all places which are condemned to live at the expense of an ephemeral and floating population. It is not a town; it is an immense hotel. It is in this charming spot, in fact, that the fashionable world, emigrating in the spring, sets up its household gods,—not only in the vast hotels of the place, but in the cottages which abound all about. Saratoga is celebrated for its mineral waters, and within a circle of about a mile and a-half the tourist will find in the valley which surrounds the town, covered springs, whither, according either to his fancy or the advice of his medical man, he can repair, tumbler in hand, and quaf here a chalybeate beverage, there a solution of manganese, or further on a draught flavoured with sulphuric acid. In a word, the waters of Saratoga are laxative, astringent, curative, or agreeable. The Congress Well is the most celebrated, 39 and every morning sees grouped around it the sick, the idle, and the tourist.

One morning in July, 1848, I found myself here chatting with my friend Captain Mayne Reid, the author of many charming works on sporting subjects, some of which I have had great pleasure in rendering into French. We were talking about hunting, fishing, distant excursions in the vast forests of the West and across the uncultivated steppes of the American Sahara, until the morning seemed as short to us as it did to the idlers of Saratoga.

“Well,” said Captain Mayne Reid, “as you are so keen, I must show you one evening a bit of sport fit for a king.”

“Many thanks, my dear Captain. And what may that be?”

“Salmon fishing.”

“By all means. And where is it to be?”

“In Saratoga Lake.”

“Salmon in a lake!” I replied with astonishment. “I thought that the king of fishes was never at home except in large streams and rivers?”

“You are right; but the Lake Saratoga is a smaller edition of that which traverses the Rhine at Geneva; with this difference, that it is one of the most picturesque localities in New York State. However, we are only five miles from this splendid sheet of water, and if nothing prevents you from 40 joining me to-morrow evening (provided always there be a fine moonlight), we shall enjoy a kind of sport known only to the friends of Mr. Marvin. We shall be fortunate indeed if the worthy host agrees to lend us his osprey.”

“His osprey!” I cried. “But what on earth shall we do with a stinking bird that sleeps all day long in the hotel garden?”

“We shall do with him what the sportsmen of the middle ages used to do when they rode forth upon their steeds, with falcon on wrist.”

“Then Marvin's osprey has been trained as the ger-falcons and merlins of former days?”

“Precisely! he is a fishing-eagle, and of the best kind.”

“Ha! ha! Then Marvin's osprey be it, by all means. Make every arrangement for the expedition, and I will join you. At what o'clock shall we start?”

“About three in the afternoon. We will sup at the Lake Hotel, and after a glass of toddy and a cigar, we will embark with Sandy Hair, the old fisherman of the place.”

“Agreed. At three o'clock to-morrow be it.” We parted; he to the hotel, and I after my business. That evening, when I met him at the hotel, he told me that Marvin had consented

to let us have his osprey, and I may add he had proffered us this service in the most obliging manner. Indeed, 41 it should be noted that the worthy host of Saratoga has always professed a particular deference and esteem towards men of letters. He placed the osprey entirely at our disposal, only requiring us to take the greatest care of him, and not to fatigue him too much; for, said he, “Jonathan”—that was the bird's name,—“is such a desperate fisherman, that he'll work all night if you let him.”

Next day, at three o'clock precisely, Reid and myself got into a buggy, with our osprey slung in a large hamper behind. As we drove through Saratoga it was the time for promenading, and those who were acquainted with Reid and myself looked at us with an inquisitive air, as if demanding what we had got in our basket. We drove rapidly on, however, and were soon lost in the hilly road which mounts up from Saratoga to the forest-crowned summits, on the opposite side of which was the lake. The road was splendid and very well kept, although the country which it traversed was not cleared for more than a third of its length. On both sides our gaze was arrested by impenetrable screens of verdure, forests which the axe had respected, and whose superb vegetation surpassed all that the imagination could conceive. The tops of the pines intermingled with those of the cypress, the elms mingled with the maples, and the chestnut-trees interlaced both roots and branches with those of the stately oak. Beneath the tall trees grew junipers, ferns, brambles, 42 and brushwood of every kind, mingled with creepers and wild vines. A thousand strange noises were heard in these solitudes, and disturbed the silence which reigned around. Sometimes it was the hooting of the owls or the cawing of the rooks; sometimes the song of mocking-bird, or the murmur of a cascade falling upon moss-clad rocks; sometimes it was the squirrel playing among the branches, or the call of the moor-cock in the underwood.

Apparently, we incurred no kind of danger in the middle of this civilized country, but at a turn of the road a fearful spectacle met our eyes. Clouds of smoke obscured the heavens, and a devouring flame was licking up the trees and crackling with a noise resembling a discharge of musketry. The forest had been set on fire by the carelessness of some wood-

cutters, and we could see the poor devils, frightened out of their wits at the mischief they had caused, huddled together by the roadside, and looking with an air of stupefaction at the progress of the flames. I had never seen anything grander, and even the fire in the prairie which had so nearly put an end to my career in 1848, had not offered so terrible a spectacle as these trees, wrestling as it were in the agonies of death, and falling down into the flames which consumed them. Our horse began to be frightened, and raised his head as if he wished to run away; but Reid held him with a firm grip, and cried out to me not to stir, for he would answer 43 for our safety. On this, I shut my eyes, holding on fast to the sides of the vehicle, whilst Reid drove on through the flames. Five minutes afterwards, Reid, who had never lost his presence of mind throughout, called out, “All right, my friend, here we are on the other side the fire, and there's nothing more to fear.”

I opened my eyes and found a splendid view before them. Within a few yards of the scene of the calamity, Nature was as calm as if nothing had happened. One would have supposed it to have been a dream from which we had just awakened. Even the horse understood that there was no longer any danger, for he calmed down at once without requiring to be pulled up. Presently we heard the osprey fluttering about in its basket, and on Reid getting down he found the bird flapping its wings against the wicker sides like one demented. The bird had evidently understood the danger to which we had been exposed, and on recovering its presence of mind was attempting to take flight. Reid, however, soon calmed it with voice and gesture, and the intelligent creature soon regained its ordinary quietude.

Our vehicle soon resumed its course, and turning down a cross-road leading to the lake we soon reached the Lake Hotel, where we arrived a little after five o'clock, and where we found the host waiting for us on the threshold, with a napkin under his arm and a smile upon his lips.

“Welcome, gentlemen; I was waiting for you. Marvin gave me notice you were coming, and if your appetites are as good as my cook's fare, I shall be delighted. The champagne is in ice, and I've some capital Medoc. Shall dinner be served at once?”

“By all means.”

“That's right. Come, boys, push about, and serve up hot. Take as much care of these gentlemen as you can.”

Whilst Mr. Gibson, the landlord and proprietor of the Lake Hotel, was welcoming us in his somewhat Irish fashion, Mayne Reid and I got down from the trap, and confided the horse and vehicle to the care of a black stable-help. Gibson led the way into an elegant dining-room, with drawing-room adjacent, and the windows opening upon a verandah, beneath which we could hear the washing of the lake itself. As the osprey was not to be fed, we gave orders to the servants not to open the lid of his hamper, and by no means to offer him the smallest scrap of victuals; for it is absolutely essential to the success of this kind of fishing that the bird of prey should be fasting, and sufficiently hungry to attack the fish in the water.

I pass over the details of the dinner which had been prepared for us by the *chef* of the worthy host. It was exquisite, and was composed of excellent fish, superior meat, capital vegetables, and delicious fruit. The champagne was as cool as snow, and the 45 Medoc sparkled like rubies in the glasses. Then came coffee and *liqueurs* , all first-rate; and these, with regalias, completed a repast of which a *cordon bleu* might have been proud.

Whilst we thus gave ourselves up to forgetfulness in this American Capua, night came on, and just as we desired, a fine moon rose upon the horizon, shedding its silver radiance over the star-spangled heavens, when Sandy Hair, the fisherman of the lake, came to rouse us from our dream, and inform us that it was “time to go.” Seizing the hamper containing the osprey, and placing it on his head with one hand, whilst in the other he held

a three-pronged spear with a fir handle, he led the way down the garden to the banks of the lake, where we found a good-sized boat securely moored.

“Good luck to ye, gentlemen,” cried Gibson from the verandah, whither he had accompanied us, and to whose good wishes we replied with a fervent “Thank you.”

“You must keep quiet, massas,” whispered Sandy Hair, casting the boat loose, and paddling it through a bed of water-lilies. “De captin' know berry well how easy the salmon are frighted. When we are once out in de lake, there must be only signs and no talkee.”

“Quite right, Sandy,” replied my friend, and I of course promised to obey orders.

The black then began to row rigorously, but 46 quietly, so as to get into the stream; and when we reached that a stroke now and then, quietly pulled, was all that was necessary.

The surface of the water looked like oil, and whilst the negro and my companion were carefully examining the space around, my eyes were wandering into the distance, lost in admiration of the panorama around me. Nothing could be grander than the large clumps of fir-trees and dark-foliaged cedars reflecting the silver rays of the moon. Before us lay a lofty mountain, whose steeps disappeared among clumps of privet, wild vines, and dwarf oaks. All round the lake, down to the very margin, the pines and cedars mingled their leafy branches, casting dark shadows on the water, to within fifteen or twenty yards from the brink. To our right, a log cabin, the habitation of some wood-cutter or squatter, displayed through the chinks of an ill-made door a ray of the illumination within, whilst a thin wreath of white smoke made its escape by a chimney made of a drain-pipe covered with turf. A little island planted all over with pinetrees was on our left. Sandy Hair steered our boat under the shadow of these trees, and made a sign to indicate that the time had arrived for setting Jonathan at liberty.

Upon this, Reid and I opened the basket, and let the osprey act as he pleased. We could readily guess, by the appearance of the surface of the water, 47 that fish were all round

us. The osprey first shook his wings, and stretched his neck and legs, then sharpened his claws and beak. Presently we saw him take flight, and after hovering about fifty yards over our heads, dart like an arrow upon a black spot which appeared about fifty yards from the boat. The disturbance of the water at first prevented us from seeing what Jonathan had caught; but presently, when the bird had succeeded in fixing his talons in the fish's back, we saw him raise up an enormous salmon, whose repeated efforts could not free itself from the terrible embrace. As long as it could remain on the surface of the water, its struggles and blows with the tail were tremendous; then it endeavoured to dive and drag its tormenter with it down into the depths of the lake. It was all in vain. The osprey soon won the victory, and we saw him soar above our heads, holding in his claws, as in a vice, a magnificent silver-scaled fish of some twenty pounds weight.

Sandy Hair well knew what to do at this conjuncture, and obedient to a sign from the Captain, he paddled in the direction of the bird, whom my friend recalled by a peculiar cry, which was obeyed immediately, and a moment afterwards Jonathan deposited at the bottom of our boat the splendid salmon. As is invariably the case, the fish's eyes had been scooped out by the bird, to render the victory easy. Two pecks with the beak had settled that matter.

48

I could scarcely believe my senses. The strange spectacle presented by this curious mode of fishing made me feel as if in a dream, when Mayne Reid whispered, “Look out! Jonathan's off again.”

Once more the fishing-eagle had sighted his prey in the wake of our boat, and in a moment he was fifty feet above our heads. For a short time he hovered in space, and then, as before, came down with incredible swiftness, and an enormous salmon was fighting in his clutches, which, obedient to the call of Mayne Reid and Sandy Hair, he presently deposited at the bottom of the boat. Five times did the brave Jonathan renew

this extraordinary performance, and five times did he obtain a victory over the prey, which vainly struggled against him in the liquid element.

On the sixth occasion, alas! whilst Jonathan was hovering above the lake, a shot was heard from the shore in the direction of the log-cabin which has been already mentioned, and what was our dismay when we saw our osprey wheel round and drop an inert mass upon the surface of the water, never more to rise! A few words will serve to explain the accident. The inhabitant of the log-cabin was fishing quietly in front of his hut when he saw the bird, and without suspecting that we were lurking near (for our boat was concealed beneath the shadow of the island), but taking Jonathan for one of those wild depredators whom all sportsmen make war 49 upon whenever they get them within reach of their guns, he imagined that he was only performing an act of justice in taking a shot at Mr. Marvin's bird.

Reid, Sandy Hair, and I lost no time in getting to the bank and running to the hut of the wretch whose fatal skill had played us such a trick, all charitably intending to give him such a lesson that he would not be likely to repeat his exploit; but the fellow was a genuine Yankee, and his imperturbable coolness and the reasonableness of his answers (given with the nasal twang peculiar to his race) completely disarmed us.

“Wall! Heow was I tu know that the bird was a genewine sportsman,—a bird fit to be fed on larks, and not a darned thief only fit to be stuffed? Mr. Marvin's osprey, was it? Wall! I'm very sorry, but what ken I du? I ken only git another, and I ra'aly think that won't be very difficult. Other day I saw a nest of 'em in a rock at the end of the lake, and there's probably eggs, if not young 'uns. The old birds air finer than Jonathan. It's a great pity—but what ken be done? I'll look at the nest, and when the birds are strong, I'll shoot the old birds and take the young 'uns and send 'em to Mr. Marvin. I hope he'll excuse me—but what cud I du?”

We had nothing for it but to be satisfied with his excuses, but the great difficulty with Reid and myself was how to break the news to Mr. Marvin so as VOL. II. E 50 to make him satisfied with the proposed arrangement. After a consultation with Mr. Gibson we determined upon the following course of action: We were to stay a day or so at the Lake Hotel and fish or shoot, whilst Sandy was to be despatched to Mr. Marvin with a letter in which Reid and I explained to Mr. Marvin the lamentable end of Jonathan, and the arrangement we had come to with his murderer.

Sandy came back next day. Mr. Marvin, with his usual good feeling, had received the fatal news like a hero. He sent us a very friendly letter, thanking us warmly for the measures which we had taken to repair his loss, “only,” added he, “do you think the confounded Yankee will keep his word?”

“We must go and look after the fellow,” said Mayne Reid, “and remind him of his promise;” and without further delay, when we had finished our breakfast, we got into Sandy's boat, each armed with a rifle which our host lent us.

The Yankee was sitting in front of his door, smoking his pipe, when we arrived opposite the hut. After listening to Marvin's letter, he agreed to start at once for the osprey's nest, in order that we might at once ascertain what it contained. This proposition suited us exactly and we took him into our boat, with his long rifle, the very weapon with which he had committed the crime. An hour afterwards 51 we reached the bottom of a perpendicular rock, which rose sheer out of the lake and we could distinctly make out the eyrie of the birds about five and twenty yards up the face. It was built in a fissure and rested partly on a shrub, whose roots adhered to the rock. It was probable that at that hour of the day the nest would be deserted and that the old birds were seeking their own food or that of their eaglets.

The Yankee took off his coat, climbed up the rock, and in a few moments found himself on a level with the Osprey's eyrie.

“Hurrah!” cried he, “there's three young 'uns, and all fit to take. We're jest in time, for in three days they'd all have gone. Must make haste get 'em down though, for the old 'uns won't be far off. Look out below, while I pack 'em up.”

By the aid of a long cord and a handkerchief tied together at the four corners the three eaglets were got down in safety, when Sandy drew our attention to a couple of black spots which appeared in the distance.

“Here am de fader and moder; so de Yankee must look out if he don't come down quick.”

“Down with you,” cried Mayne Reid, “there come the eagles!”

Our Yankee friend did not wait for a repetition of the warning, but down he came much quicker than he went up, and at the very moment when his feet E 2 52 touched the bow of the boat the ospreys reached their eyrie. “Fire!” cried Mayne Reid. There was a double explosion and the two birds fell mortally wounded, down the branches and rocks right into the lake. These birds measured six feet three inches across the wings, and their skins were sent to New York to be stuffed for Barnum's Museum. Poor Jonathan obtained the same honour, though it was a recompense too feeble for his merits and his virtues. As for the three young ospreys, only two of them throve.

One of my friends who is still living in the States wrote to me lately sending me the kind remembrances of Mr. Marvin, adding by way of postscript that the ospreys of the United States Hotel were in excellent case, and that they worthily succeeded their predecessor in providing their fortunate proprietor with the best salmon in Saratoga Lake.

Five months after the adventure which I have narrated, the Yankee who slew Jonathan was drowned in the lake, and his body was found half devoured by the birds of prey. So Jonathan was avenged after all.

IV.—THE MILK POND OYSTERS.

The excellent La Fontaine (that admirable wit who was a genius without pretending to be so) has penned in one of his Fables one of the finest eulogiums possible upon the oyster. Two lovers of the shell-fish find an oyster on the shore at the same moment, and quarrel about its possession. One of them, at last, makes the following proposition:—

“Celui qui le premier a pu l'apercevoir En sera le gobeur, l'autre le verra faire. —Si par-là l'on juge l'affaire, Reprit son compagnon, j'ai l'œil bon, Dieu merci! —Je ne l'ai pas mauvais aussi, Dit l'autre; et je l'ai vue avant vous, sur, ma vie! —Eh bien, vous l'avez vue et moi je l'ai sentie!”

A judge, named Pierre Dandin., passes by, and they accept him for arbitrator; but mark the result. Instead of considering which of the two has the best right, the man of law seizes the oyster, opens, and swallows it with the utmost gravity, and then having given— “—à chacun une écaille” gives orders “Qu'en paix chacun chez soi s'en aille.”

Certainly an oyster must be an article of great 54 importance for two men to quarrel about its possession, and for a judge to be guilty of such a denial of justice for its sake. This fable is more than a eulogium of the oyster; it is an apotheosis.

The oyster is one of those creatures which are to be met with almost everywhere, in every sea, and which have served for the food of men in very remote ages.* It is a light, nutritious, and agreeable food, and is so easily digested that great oyster-eaters have been known to eat from fifty to eighty dozen without the slightest inconvenience, and some even can eat a hearty breakfast after such a preface, just as if they had eaten absolutely nothing.

* The most ancient naturalists make mention of the oyster. It was upon the shells of these molluscs that the Athenians wrote their suffrages and voted their decrees, and the word *Ostracism* is derived from the Greek O##pe *ov*, which signified Oyster. It seems

impossible that before using the shell the Athenians did not discover the value of its contents. According to Pliny, a certain ingenious Roman, Sergius Orata by name, invented a mode of constructing *vivaria* in the neighbourhood of Baiæ for the purpose of fattening oysters, particularly those of the Lucrine Lake, which then had a great reputation on account of their delightful flavour. This invention dates from the time of the orator Lucius Crassus, before the Marsic War; but before the time of Pliny himself the Romans had begun to recognise the superiority of Ocean oysters over those of the Mediterranean. They were sent to Italy during the winter packed up in snow, sufficiently compressed to prevent the shell from opening. Vitellins, say some historians, was in the habit of devouring twelve hundred at each meal, and he repeated this four times a day. What a stomach for oysters! and what capacity!

This is not all that may be urged in favour of oysters. The water which they contain holds sulphate of magnesium, sulphate of lime, and 55 osmazome. It frees the digestive and biliary organs, and has other good effects. The shells even are useful as manure for the soil, and for filtering purposes.

The oysters of the United States are, in my opinion, the best in the world, and there is an immense consumption of oysters there. It is almost a national food. Oysters served plain, or with pepper, salt, and vinegar, oyster-soap, fried oysters, oyster-sauce, pickled oysters, and so forth. The shells are then gathered carefully, taken into the country, ground to powder, and used for the renovation of the soil, and so nothing is wasted either of the shell or its contents.*

* The reader may not be unwilling to receive a few particulars as to the nature of the oyster, so I will add the following:—

The general character of the oyster is to be oval in shape, sometimes round, but never symmetrical; the shell thickish, pearly inside, and more or less roughly laminated on the exterior. The creature has a head, or rather a, part furnished with a mouth, corresponding

with the hinges and ligaments which unite the valves; the hinder part, which is larger, lies towards the open side of the valves. The mantle (a thin transparent skin which covers all the body of the oyster) is very ample, and formed of two lobes separated from each other in every part of their circumference, except above the mouth, where it forms a kind of hood which covers the mouth. This mantle is thickened at the borders and provided with two rows. of cilia, or very sensitive tentacles, which are muscular and retractile. It is formed of two leaves, in the interior of which a yellow matter is secreted, Which, according to the commonly received opinion, is composed of the eggs.

The oyster has no organs of locomotion, and those of sight, hearing and smell appear to be equally wanting. It adheres to its shell by a very powerful muscle. The apparatus of nutrition is better defined than that of relation. The mouth is large, simple, easily dilated, and placed on the anterior part of the fold of the mantle, inside the hood which is formed by the junction of the two lobes, and it is furnished with two pairs of tentacles. The mouth leads directly into the stomach, which is a pocket furnished with very thin sides and is placed in the thickness of the liver, which is very large and of a brown colour, with a number of openings to give vent to the secretions. The intestine winds about several times inside the liver and issues from it about the middle of the back, where it terminates by a moveable, infundibuliform orifice.

The respiratory organs consist of four leaves of unequal length. The apparatus for circulation consists of a pyriform heart, placed between the adductor muscle and the viscera. From the heart issues a large aortic canal which is divided into three branches, one for the mouth and tentacles, one for the liver and organs of digestion, and the third for the posterior part of the body. Oysters are hermaphrodite and reproduce without copulation. About the beginning of spring, they eject a spawn which resembles drops of tallow, in which, by the aid of a magnifying glass, may be distinguished a multitude of small oysters all ready formed, which attach themselves to rocks and stones, to each other, and to every solid object which comes in their way. The shell is formed by the membranous covering called the mantle. In the thickness of the warp of this cloak, an organic woof has

been observed in which a great many calcareous granules are secreted, which granules, with the organic matter which surrounds them, serve to increase the thickness of the covering.

[Although some objection might be taken to certain points in this description of the physiology of the oyster, it is sufficiently near to the present state of knowledge to pass muster.— Trans.]

56

Oysters abound along all the coasts of North America and enter largely into the food of the people. The bays and creeks of New Jersey, Massachusetts, Delaware, Virginia, the two Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana and Texas abound with oysters which attain an enormous size and ar0e of exquisite flavour.* In the Northern States, the oysters

* The food of the oyster in a wild state consists of spawn, entomozoa, &c. Their duration of existence has not been ascertained; but three years are required to produce a marketable oyster, and some think that they do not live beyond ten to fifteen years.

57 are smaller, but always excellent. They are found on every shore, attached to rocks and the roots of trees. They remain there quite immoveable, fixed to each other and forming those oyster-banks where the dredgers come to fish for them to form *parks* , where they are fed upon ground Indian corn, bran and vegetables, which give them that delicious flavour which is so highly appreciated. These reservoirs of salt-water are usually from three to four feet deep, and communicate with the sea by a reservoir whereby the water can flow in and out.

All along the coasts of North America the oyster fishery is closed during the months of May, June, July and August. The popular prejudice (and a very salutary one it is in its results) is that, when, there is no R in the name of the month, oysters are unwholesome. The fact is that oysters are edible at all seasons, but during these four months, the stomach of the creature assumes a whitish colour, because the ovary is full. It is the

season for spawning or *spatting.* Thus law and popular prejudice are fortunately in accordance.

The fishing for oysters is managed with the drag, a sort of bent iron shovel, furnished with a bag or pocket made of leather or rushes, or a net made of strong cord; and this is firmly fastened to the stern of the boat, which sails on slowly before the wind, drawing the drag after it, which scrapes up the oysters like a rake, and collects them into the bag or 58 pocket. By this means, twelve hundred oysters may sometimes be drawn up at a haul. These oysters fished up from the ocean in a wild state are placed in parks, in which they. are laid in their natural position (that is to say, flat, with the dome-shell underneath), on the sloping part of the shore, but at a sufficient depth to render it difficult for thieves to get at them, and yet not at too great a depth, for fear of the mud deposits. If the Surveyor (as the man is called who looks after the park), has placed the oysters properly, if he manages them with care, and above all if he prevents a deposit of mud from burying them,—a risk to which they are always very liable,—for which purpose, he cleanses the walls of the park constantly, and throws clean water over the oysters whenever they are left dry,—his oysters will be all the sooner fit for the market. He must carefully pick out all those that die; and they may easily be detected by the fact that they keep their valves open when the water is down.

Crabs are very fond of oysters, and come up into the parks with the flow of the tide; mussels and starfish or five-fingers (which suck the creature out with their trunks or suckers), and the whelks, are also dangerous enemies which have to be avoided.

In addition to these, there is a bird which devours oysters in large quantities. It belongs to the order *Charadriadæe* , and is called the oyster-catcher (*Hæematopus 59 ostralegus*). He is timorous, watchful, and always on his guard; he walks along the shore with a certain air of dignity, which sets off his beautiful black and white plumage and his coral-coloured beak. On the oyster-beds, the oyster-catcher employs that arched beak by inserting it between the oyster and the rock to which it is fixed; and when the valves open he

seizes the poor mollusc, tears it out, and flies off with a lamentable cry, “Wheep! wheep!” skimming the waves leisurely its goes, and betaking himself to some favourite rock where he can devour his prey without fear of being disturbed. As he is not worth much as game, the oyster-catcher is usually shot only by the Surveyors, who treat them exactly as our gamekeepers treat the magpies, martins, sparrow-hawks, buzzards, and other birds of prey.

The best oysters in the United States are the Shrewsbury and the Milk Pond oysters. In Rhode Island, moreover, they produce green oysters,* but

* Green oysters are the same species as the white ones, and they may be *greened* intentionally. For this purpose, a park is chosen, generally a small one, and one in which the sea-water can be kept for a greater or less time without changing. When the stones or shingle at the bottom of the park begin to turn green, the oysters are laid down; but they must be arranged with greater care than is usually employed in laying oysters in a park, and above all, they must not be placed one over another. The consequence is, that when oysters are laid to green they require three times the space needed for ordinary purposes. Sometimes three days will suffice to give them a light green tint; but to acquire the deep green shade a month is necessary. The oysters will not take the green colour in winter, nor in season of great heat. A moderate temperature is required for this purpose, such as in the months of March, April, September, and October. Storms and rain are unfavourable to the operation, and also great disturbance of the water, and above all, the north wind. There are years in which oysters *green* easily, whilst in others they will hardly change colour. The greenness is attributed to the mixture of salt and fresh water, to the action of the sun, to the north-west wind, the nature of the soil, the weed, and the temperature.

60 they are little esteemed on account of their coppery taste. Besides this, the fishing for pearl oysters goes on there; and before completing this chapter I must give some account of that.

Up to 1856, it was supposed that the pearl-oyster was only found in the Indian and Chinese seas, the Persian Gulf, and California; but in that year something happened which added the United States of America to the list of pearl-bearing countries.

Before that time, the Milk Pond surveyors had occasionally discovered in their oysters, pearls of about the size of a nail-head; but one day, a proprietor of that fishery opening a few dozens for his own breakfast in the park itself was astonished at finding in each oyster, with very few exceptions, a pearl varying in size from a small pea to a hazel-nut. Among those which he collected, and which were handed over to Messrs. Tiffany, the New York jewellers, were some which were purchased for £80 to £120, and of which the real value was from £200 to £320. In the East,* where pearls have their highest value,

* The Easterns have always had a great fancy for these drops of solidified dew, as they call the fine pearls, with which they give pomp and magnificence to their beautiful costumes. The Jews, who were near the Persian Gulf, where the finest pearls are fished, must have known them from early times. Job is the earliest author in Holy Writ who makes mention of pearls. He says: “No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls, for the price of Wisdom is above rubies,” and pearls are often mentioned in the Proverbs of Solomon. After the conquest of Alexandria, when the Macedonians had effected the conquest of the East, luxury was carried to the highest extent, and pearls were among the most highly esteemed of jewels. At the period of their greatest splendour, the Romans wore garments embroidered with pearls, and the Roman ladies covered their arms and shoulders with them, and strung them in their hair. The value of these jewels came very near to that of the diamond. Julius Cæsar presented to Servilia, the mother of Brutus, and sister of Cato, a pearl which was estimated to be worth £44,000 of our money. The celebrated pearls which adorned the ears of Cleopatra cost £150,000, and in the *fâte* given by Antony, she is reported to have dissolved in vinegar and drunk in a cup of wine a pearl worth £60,000. One fact is certain, that long before the discovery of the New World the Red Indians of America wore necklaces and bracelets of fine pearls. Two centuries ago, a pearl was purchased at Caltfa, by Tavernier, the traveller, and sold to the Shah of Persia

for £112,000. Philip II. of Spain, received from America a pearl that weighed twenty-five carats, and was valued at £3200. An Arab prince possessed the most beautiful pearl known; the most beautiful, not so much on account of its size, as because it was so clear and transparent that the light could be seen through it. It weighed only twelve carats and a sixth, but he refused to take £4000 for it. The Shah of Persia possesses a diadem, each pearl in which is larger than a hazel nut. Its value is incalculable. At the “Grande Exposition” of 1855, the Queen of England exhibited some splendid pearls, and the Emperor of the French exhibited a collection of 408 pearls, weighing nearly two hundred and forty-seven grains each, all of fine form and water. The united value was £20,000. At the same exhibition also was a magnificent Orient pearl as large as a partridge's eye, which was valued at a high price by connoisseurs, and if the fellow to it could only be found, the pair would fetch a price that could not easily be estimated.

61 Jack Minton, the Milk Pond proprietor, would have soon become a millionaire. One morning, Chance (that great master of most things sublunary) conducted 62 Jack to the shore of a creek in the state of New Jersey, not far from his own park at Milk Pond. It was in the month of June, and it was so warm that he determined upon taking a bath; so he stripped without more ado and plunged into the water. As he was gambolling about, he picked up some oysters with his hands, and bringing them ashore he drew his knife, and proceeded to open half-a-dozen. What was his astonishment when on opening the shells of the first he perceived a pearl, whose beauty, size, and water so delighted him, that he uttered a cry of joy. After having carefully detached and examined it, Jack opened the rest of the oysters, and found three more in the remaining five, all however of smaller size than the first. “Good God!” he cried, “is it possible that I have discovered a new California? Let us see, however, if this be not mere chance.” At this moment, a big hulking fellow appeared calling out “Shares!” It was one of those *b'hoys* of whom mention has been already made. Jack turned round, and found the intruder standing at the entrance of a cave in the rock, where he had been concealed and whence he had seen all that had happened, and overheard the imprudent words of the fisherman.

“Shares?” cried Jack. “Why, what do you mean?”

“Oh! it won't do to turn spiteful with me. I've 63 seen everything, and don't want your leave to jump in the water, get some oysters, and take my share of pearls. However, if you've no objection, we'll strike up a partnership, and shall make our profit of it.”

Jack bit his lips with rage; but there was no remedy for it. “Very well,” he cried, “let us be partners. Of course we shall neither of us say anything about it, and meantime we must always fish together, and the price of the produce will be divided between us. Pray, what is your name?”

“Drake! Junius Drake, at your service.”

“There is my hand then, my dear Drake. Let us continue to fish together as friends and brothers.” And, upon this, Jack threw himself into the water, and was speedily followed by his companion.

Not to make a long story of it, before the day came to an end the two partners had gathered about three hundred oysters, in which they found seventy-one pearls of various sizes, some as large as a hazel-nut, but all round, plump, and iridescent.*

* The shape of a pearl of good quality depends upon the situation in which chance has placed the nucleus or seed. If it be between the fleshy cloaks of the mollusk, the constant movements will give the pearl a rounded form. If the pearl be deposited in the hinges, its form will be compressed, and if it touches the bottom of the shell, so that the creature is unable to move, it will adhere to the enamel or take an eccentric form. There are pearls of different colours,—white, rose-coloured, yellow, grey, blue, and completely black. This variety of colour is derived from the nature of the soil on which the mollusk is found, and to the gases and different elements which float about in the circumambient element in which it is born, grows, and dies.

64 That very evening, Jack and Junius returned to New York, and after spending the night at an hotel, went next morning early to call on Messrs. Tiffany and Young and sell the contents of their bag. Those well-known tradesmen, after carefully examining the pearls, asked of our Americans whence they had obtained them.

“Ah! that's a secret, and you have no concern with it. The pearls are fresh-gathered. Look at their weight and colour. Make a bargain with us if you like, and tell us what they are worth, little and big.”

Messrs. Tiffany and Young, after consulting together, offered a round sum of £160 for the lot. The partners demanded double, but in the end accepted £200, which they shared between them.

Next day, Jack and Junius, who had spent the night in New York going from tavern to tavern, and spending freely a portion of their gains, returned to Milk Pond. They were resolved to make hay while the sun shone, and to gather another stock for the jewellers. That day they were so lucky that they collected seventy-four pearls, three-and-twenty of which were very large. For these, they got £300.

“Don't like it,” said Junius to himself; “I've made a bad bargain with friend Minton. If he could only drown himself some fine day I should have it all to myself.” This fatal thought took root in his mind, and grew there so resolutely that 65 the wretch determined to get rid of his partner. From the conception of this odious project to its execution there was but one step, and this he was not long in taking. One evening, just about nightfall, when Minton was about taking his last plunge, Drake dashed in after him like a shark, seized him by the neck, and never let go as long as he thought there was any life in his body. Then returning to the shore, he dressed himself quickly, packed up the oysters which they had gathered in a sack, and went to open them behind a rock about half a league distant from the scene of his crime, in the certainty that no one had been witness to his crime. When the examination was concluded, the ruffian cast a look around Milk Pond Bay, over which

the moon. was shedding its pale rays, and started off for the Quarantine to get on board the steamer for New York.

Whilst the murderer was hastening from Milk Pond, poor Minton was washed ashore by the waves, when gradually the freshness of the night revived him, and after a time his apparently inanimate body began to move, first of all an arm, and then a leg. “Help! help!” he cried in a feeble voice, when a fisherman came round Shrewsbury Rock on his way to Borrax Creek to pull up his nets.

“Hulloa!” cried he, “what have we here? A corpse surely.” VOL. II. F

66

“Help,” repeated Minton.

“A very lively one at any rate,” quoth the fellow. “Come, cheer up, friend. How did this happen? Take a sip of brandy,” he added, offering Minton a gourd, “and then tell me all about it.”

Minton recounted to him his story, and the name of his partner.

“Junius Drake!” cried the man. “Why, he's the biggest scoundrel in New Jersey. I know him well for a thief and a wretch. Jingo! but you've had a narrow escape; and if you take my advice, you'll lose no time in lodging your deposition before the nearest justice. Do you feel strong enough to get to Morristown?”

“Oh yes. Anything to have my revenge of that wretch.”

Minton found his way to the house of the nearest justice, who received his deposition and issued a warrant against the partner. Drake was soon found by the New York police, dead drunk in a bar-room, and standing liquor to a dozen scoundrels of his own kidney. He was thrown into prison, and bail was refused, though offered to a large amount. As soon as this romance of the pearl-fishery became known there was a regular pearl fever throughout

the States. From Rhode Island to the Carolinas, oysters became all the rage, and heaps of the ostracea were opened and thrown aside, shells and fish together, to rot in the sun and infect the air with 67 a pestilential stench. This fever lasted for two months. Some adventurers found pearls, but the greater number lost their time and labour. Jack Minton was the only one to make his fortune, for Milk Pond Bay was apparently the only locality favourable to the development of the jewel.* F 2

* The horny and calcareous matter (partaking equally of animal and mineral characteristics) which the oysters apply to the walls of their shells is known by the name of mother-of-pearl. The French call it *nacre*, from the Arab word *nakar*—signifying a shell. When this matter is very abundant it forms itself into little beads, which often adhere to the interior of the valves, and are sometimes found lodged within the fleshy folds of the mollusc. In the latter case, the pearls are more spherical, and become enlarged every year by a fresh coat of nacreous matter. They remain brilliant, translucent, and hard; they are what are called *fine pearls.* The *nacre* and the pearl are evidently formed of the same substance, and only differ in the arrangement of the layers. In the shell, the layers are horizontal, whilst in the pearl they are curved and concentric. This form of structure attracts luminous rays upon the surface so as to render it of a silvery brilliancy, at once dull and lustrous, very pleasant and beautiful to the eye. A piece of the shell rounded artificially in imitation of a pearl can never rival the brightness and beauty produced by the slow handiwork of nature. The *nacre* owes the brilliance which is, its chief merit to the excessively thin layers of air which lie between the calcareous and transparent leaves of which it is composed. The nature of the pearl and its mode of formation lead one to suppose that these precious concretions may be found in all shell-fish of which the interior of the shell is made of *nacre*, whether they be oysters, limpets, mussels, Venus's ear, &c., and, in fact, pearls are found in both the common oyster and the mussel. The large fresh-water mussel which is found in the mud of our rivers also produces pearls; but the pearls which are found in them usually resemble, both in shade and colour, the interior of the shell in which it is found. The *Perine marine*, a species of mussel found in the Red

Sea, the Mediterranean, &c., and which attains a great size, has a reddish interior to its shell, and produces rose-coloured pearls. This mussel furnishes also a greenish silk, or fibre, which is called *cyssus.* The Sicillians and Calabrians spin it, and make stockings and gloves of it; also a silky kind of cloth, of a golden lustrous brown, shot with green. Specimens of the *cyssus* were exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1855.

68

There can be little doubt that there are certain marine insects which artistically perforate the shell of the oyster, and produce that phenomenon which results in a pearl.*

* The formation of pearls is sometimes promoted by divers causes which excite the mollusc to secrete an extraordinary quantity of the nacreous deposit. Thus, when it is attacked by marine worms, which pierce their way through the shell, the creature repels the invasion by depositing a larger quantity of nacreous matter, and by that means thickens its protective covering. It is probable that this excess of substance agglomerates in small particles, which grow dense and hard, and assume more or less spherical forms, according as they may be deposited against the shell itself, or among the membranous lobes of the animal's flesh. These pearly formations increase in size every year, as may be seen by the concentric layers of which they are composed. In the same manner, a grain of sand, the *ovum* of a fish, or any other foreign body entering the shell, and lodging itself in a place whence it cannot be expelled, becomes covered by the secretion and thus forms the nucleus of a pearl. In India and China, attempts have been made to utilise this fact, and produce pearls of unusual size by introducing pieces of shell or glass beads into the half-open valves of the oyster, and even by touching the creature through the shell with a fine auger; but hitherto this method has not been attended by any very remarkable results.

Jack Minton took his preserver into partnership, and so managed Milk Pond as to make a fortune of from £50,000 to £60,000. In due time, Drake appeared before the Court of Session, and, in spite of his plea of “Not guilty,” was condemned to be hanged forthwith. He expiated his crime at Morristown, in front of the prison door, and in the presence of all

the oyster-fishers of the country. Minton 69 desired that his life might be spared, and even, it is said, offered a bribe of £5,000 to effect his escape; but these attempts to restore to American society so bright an ornament were happily in vain, and the Milk Pond assassin died the death which he so richly merited.

The pearl fishery is an industry of some importance in the Gulf of Mexico, where it opens in the month of February and closes in April. During the season, the boats start in the evening before the breeze, so as to arrive on the banks of Key West Island, and the other Florida banks, about sunrise. As soon as day appears, the divers begin their work, and the fishing lasts until mid-day, when the breeze softens, changes, and blows landwards, and everybody starts off to return to the mainland as fast as oars and sails will carry them. Directly they arrive in port, the cargoes of oysters are landed without loss of time, to enable the boats to return to the oyster-grounds as soon as possible. Each of these pearl-fishery boats is manned by a crew of twenty-one men; viz., the captain, ten rowers, and ten divers.

When they arrive upon the oyster-grounds, the divers are divided into two companies of five men each, who dive and rest alternately. Habituated to this kind of work from their infancy, they will dive to a depth of fifteen yards, taking with them a large stone to help them down. This is of pyramidal 70 form, and is pierced at the smaller end by a hole, through which a rope passes which fastens it to the boat. When he dives, each man is provided with a bag or net to put the oysters in, and this he grasps with the toes of his left foot, seizing the rope which is fastened to the stone with those of his right foot; then seizing the signal rope in his right hand, and stopping up his nostrils with his left, he plunges in, either straight or crouching on his heels.

As soon as he gets to the bottom he hangs the net around his neck and fills it with oysters as fast as he can, and when that is done, he gives a signal by the rope to his comrades on board, and is pulled up speedily with his burden.

This work is so hard that, on regaining the boat, the divers will often emit from the mouth, nose, and ears water stained with blood; and nevertheless, when the weather is favourable, they will repeat the operation fifteen or twenty times; if the weather be unfavourable they cannot do so more than three or four times. At the greatest depths (that is to say, about fifteen yards) the most skilful divers cannot remain below for more than thirty seconds. The American divers, like those of the Indian Ocean, never live to be old men. Their bodies become covered with sores, through the internal rupture of blood-vessels; their sight fails them, and they are very subject to apoplexy.

71

The most terrible danger which the oyster divers incur is that of meeting a shark; and the signal that one of those monsters is in sight causes among them a panic as great as that which a hawk excites among a covey of partrides. Sometimes, if the diver strikes himself against a rock, his imagination will convert it into the horrible jaws of a shark, and he will return to the surface to communicate his alarm to his companions.

When the flotilla of boats has unloaded its cargoes, each proprietor takes his own lot, and spreads it upon matweed in a hollow dug in the earth, and leaves the temperature to act upon the mollusks, which very soon putrefy. The pearls are then carefully searched out, and the putrefied matter is afterwards carefully boiled, so that nothing of any value shall escape. The pearls when extracted from the shells are carefully washed and cleaned, and are afterwards polished with an almost impalpable powder made of the *nacre* itself. They are then arranged in classes according to size, by being sifted through copper sieves of various dimensions.

The next operation is drilling them for stringing. The drilling tools are of different sizes, according to the class of the pearls. They are fixed in rounded wooden handles, and are worked by a bow.

A pearl fishing-boat, furnished with a good crew of divers, can gather in a day from three thousand to three thousand five hundred pearl oysters, and 72 from four to five hundred oysters good for mother-of-pearl.

V.—TORCH-FISHING.

Undoubtedly one of the most important towns in the American Union is Chicago, on the banks of Lake Michigan. At the present time, its buildings cover a superficies of two square leagues. The commercial capital of the State of Illinois was, fifteen years ago, nothing but a group of huts, wooden houses, and the trunks of trees which had been felled and heaped up together, covered with moss and weeds, and grouped at the end of a bay sufficiently spacious to provide accommodation for a war-fleet. Thanks to emigration, the hamlet of Chicago suddenly grew to be a village; then it assumed the proportions of a little town of twenty thousand inhabitants; and at the census of 1861, it was found that there were a hundred and twenty-five thousand inhabitants in the town of Chicago.

During my stay in the State I found myself, in the month of March, 1846, staying in Chicago, which I was visiting on business. Sitting at breakfast one morning at the Great Eagle Mansion, where I was putting up, I happened to be next a man 73 whose sun-burnt complexion, horny hands, black clothes too large for his body, varnished boots soiled with mud and in disorder, and above all the hat cocked on one side (although we were sitting at table), proved him to be one who was quite ignorant of the usages of the world. A characteristic trait confirmed me in the idea that this man was even a stranger to American civilisation; for, turning to me, without the slightest introduction or preface, he said to me, with a strong nasal twang, “You ain't an American, sir, I guess?”

“No, sir; nor you either, I should suppose.”

“You're right, sir. I'm Canadian, and one of *your* sort, for I guess you're a Frenchman.”

I confessed that I was, and asked to be informed to whom it was I was speaking, at the same time acquainting him with my name, profession, and age.

“Simon Bergeron, sir, at your service; farmer, fur-dealer, and hunter,—and what's more, one of the best shots in Illinois or Canada.”

“Then, good M. Bergeron, we are brothers in St. Hubert, and I am very happy to shake you by the hand.”

“Ah! so you also are a sportsman? I should never have guessed *that* ,” quoth my new friend, regarding me with a scrutinising air, as if to ask how it was possible for a man with such a fair complexion, slim figure, and with a pair of spectacles on his nose, 74 to have any pretensions to being a sportsman. I understood the look, and hastened to assure the Canadian Nimrod that I had been, from my youth upwards, an enthusiast in all sporting matters, and that among my occupations in the States I included sport and adventurous expeditions.

“Well then,” said he, “if you *are* as fond of it as you seem to be, I can put some capital sport in your way.”

“Of what kind?”

“I must answer you by a question: have you ever tasted maple sugar? If not, here are some samples, and you may try them.”

I thanked my new friend, and assured him that I was perfectly well acquainted with the article which he had mentioned, which was the sap of the Canadian maple.

“The great maple forests, where the sugar is gathered, are not only in Upper and Lower Canada, but also in the States of Michigan, Maine, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. The finest plantations, indeed, are in the last-mentioned State,

and the sugar harvest there is the most important. If you would like to see it with your own eyes, I will be your guide, and you may rely upon it you could not have a better ore."

"I must confess to you frankly, my good friend," I replied, "that in spite of the pleasure it would 75 give me to accompany you, the attractions of a maple forest are not sufficiently great to tempt me from the fire-side at this time of the year."

"But, my good sir, what would you say if I told you that these maple forests are full of bears, 'coons, 'possums, squirrels, coyotes, deer, and gelinottes? And, to wind up, I can promise you good sport in the way of torch-fishing."

"That would be quite another matter."

"What would you say if I promised you the best sport in the world? And you will be well housed in the comfortable forest huts, where you'll always find a capital bed of soft sweet heather, plenty of good food and drink, a bright fire, and a warm welcome."

"My good sir, what you offer is so delightful, that I am afraid I shall give way to the tempter."

"Make up your mind at once, then, and be ready to start with me to-morrow morning. I came here to sell our whole crop to a merchant, and as I must be back again at Wyaconda Bottom, I shall take off to-morrow this Dissenting parson's dress—which you *must* put on or the Yankees won't trust you—put on my fur clothes and big boots, and off I go. Will you go with me? I shall be back again to Chicago in a few days, and will bring you back safe and sound."

"Be it so; your invitation is so kind that I have no choice but to accept. The only drawback is that 76 I don't happen to have either a gun or any kind of sporting tackle with me."

“Never mind that; we shall find all we require in the Sugar Camp at Wyaconda Bottom. So good day for the present. We shall meet again at dinner, and then we can settle all the rest.”

My preparations were soon made, for I had only to pack up some linen, a second pair of boots, and a change of clothes, to be used in case of accident. This done, I walked out to while away the hours between breakfast and dinner, examining the port of Chicago, the most astonishing of all on the great North American Lakes.

In the afternoon, I found my friend at table, and directly he saw me he cried out, “Hulloa! Will it be all the same to you if we start to-night? Instead of wasting the night in bed, you can stow yourself in the corner of a buggy belonging to one of my friends, and be at Peoria to-morrow morning in time for the pig market. If we take advantage of this and get there, we shall easily find a waggon to take us on to Wyaconda, which is only five miles off, and near the banks of the river.”

“To-night or to-morrow morning; it's all the same to me,” I replied; “only let us dine first, for I'm really as hungry as a hunter.”

“Make haste, then, for my friend is waiting our reply impatiently.”

We soon bolted our dinner, and washed it down 77 with a good bottle of sherry. That done, Bergeron and I bid farewell to the “Great Eagle.”

The buggy, in which Bergeron's friend offered us places, was a kind of light chaise, lined with furs, and shut up like a little box. We got inside, and the owner mounted the box to drive a pair of capital little horses of Arab blood, which were harnessed in *tandem* to this novel style of vehicle. It was four o'clock in the evening when we left Chicago, chatting of all manner of things, smoking, arguing, and determined to put on a good face against everything, even the shades of night, which were now beginning to close round us. The country through which we were passing was anything but picturesque. On every side

were fields covered with withered herbage and dead leaves. Nature seemed dead, and wore a very different appearance from that which she should wear when you visit the American prairie. When two years afterwards I traversed the same line of country, I could scarcely recognise the places which I had passed in 1846. This, however, was the month of February, when the soil was still exposed to all the rigours of the winter, and as the sun sank behind the horizon, it shed its pale rays through a forest of dead branches.

It was a bad night, and our slumbers were frequently broken by the cries of our driver, who excited his horses with voice and gesture. At day-break we entered Peoria, and two hours afterwards 78 were mounted on a couple of good nags, and on our way to Wyaconda Bottom.

The road lay through vast forests of maple trees and oaks; but as we advanced, the oaks became sparser, and at last nothing but maples could be seen, as erect as the letter I, slim as poplars, and of different sizes, from the circumference of a mast to that of a cask. The larger ones, however, were greatly in the minority. My companion informed me, as we rode on, that Wyaconda Bottom, like the greater part of the maple forests of the neighbourhood, was held upon a lease transmitting it from father to son, and that it was he who had it worked for his own benefit.

In a short time, we arrived at the Sugar Camp, the huts of which were built round a bubbling spring, and along the banks of a stream, sheltered by superb magnolias, which were already opening their white flowers without waiting for their emerald leaves. In the centre of this extemporised hamlet, a large fire-place had been built with three enormous stones, and this served to keep off the wild beasts during the night. Two men mounted guard day and night over the casks containing the sugar juice, for the maple sap is so attractive to the beasts of prey, that they will attack it at almost any risk. Two shots fired from a gun gave the signal of our arrival in camp, and two victims fell upon the ground. They were enormous opossums, that had 79 been watching from a neighbouring tree-top the moment when the sentinels turned their backs, to get a good fill of the saccharine

juice. “There's a specimen of what's to come,” cried Mr. Bergeron, as the workmen came forward to welcome their master.

“Well, boys, well!” said he, “and how goes the crop?”

“Oh! yes, sir; very well. The barrels are filling, and before the week's out we must have them emptied.”

“We'll see to this. Is breakfast over?”

“Not yet, sir.”

“Very well; then let something be got ready, for I'm devilish hungry, and so's my friend here, I dare say.” At these orders, they laid upon four rough planks, mounted upon as many oak logs, a smoked bear's ham, stewed opossum, hot corn-cakes, and a jug of maple juice, mixed with a little rum, and really very pleasant tipple. Bread made of barley and wheat flour mixed completed the repast, to which we did ample justice.

As soon as this was over, Mr. Bergeron invited me to accompany him into the forest, and examine the process of gathering the harvest of maple sugar. A brief summary of what I learnt about the sylvan sugar crop which enriches Illinois will not be out of place.

The sugar maple of the States is the tree which 80 botanists name the *Acer saccharinum.* The method of manufacturing the sugar is extremely simple, and the following is the plan adopted by Mr. Bergeron's men to extract the juice. Furnished with small augers, a number of wooden buckets, and little tubes made of elder or sugar cane, and occasionally of tin, they explore the forest, selecting the best trees. When they have found a good one, they pierce the bark at about a yard from the ground, and introduce a tube, the other end of which is placed in one of the little buckets. Care is taken to pierce the tree in an upward direction, and not to penetrate more than half an inch into the sap-wood. The American cultivators declare that by this means a more abundant flow of sap is obtained, and they

never omit to bore the holes on the side of the tree towards the south, which also has a tendency to increase the supply.

The maple sap falls at first in silver drops, and then in a thin stream, which afterwards swells into a current. As soon as a bucket is filled, it is replaced by another, and the whole is collected into large cauldrons, where the evaporation and crystallisation of the sugar is completed. The boiler is hung from two forked beams firmly fixed in the earth, and with a strong trunk of a tree laid across them, from which the boiler depends. A quick fire is kept up beneath, and the juice soon thickens into a syrup. After it has been boiling half an hour, it is taken off the fire and allowed to cool, when the residue is strained 81 through woollen blankets and set in moulds shaped like a star, in which it becomes crystallised and fit for consumption.

Maple sugar is of a reddish brown colour, like very coarse brown cane sugar, and has nearly the same flavour. It imparts a flavour rather agreeable than otherwise to the decoction of the Mocha bean. Mr. Bergeron informed me that a maple tree will yield from three to four pounds of sugar every season, and that nearly eleven millions of pounds* are gathered annually in the State of New York alone. In Canada† it is one of the most valuable crops of the country, and produces, as I am informed, a yearly total amounting to about £4,000,000 sterling. To these details, it may be added that the same trees will yield a crop for twenty consecutive years, without weakening the vigour of their vegetation. There is only one precaution to take, never to perforate the maple tree in the same place, and then a new shoot is formed so that the wound disappears in a few weeks. Managed properly, a very large tree can furnish rather more than twenty-two gallons of sap, which will produce about seven pounds and a half of sugar. VOL. II. G

* According to the statistics of 1850, the produce of the maple forests in the States of the Union was estimated at from fifty to sixty millions of pounds weight.

† At the Paris Exposition of 1855, among the articles sent from Canada, were loaves of maple sugar, the saccharine flavour of which was highly commended by the members of the jury.

82

“My good friend,” said Mr. Bergeron, with all the enthusiasm of a man of business, “I should like you to visit one of our places in Canada, especially Chateau Guy, Napierville, or Beauharnais. Then you'd begin to understand the importance of maple sugar. I'm told that they are cultivating the maple now both in France and Germany, and I've heard that in Bohemia, the Prince of Arenberg, whose ancestors have planted forests of maple, gathers every year from twelve to fourteen thousand hun. dred-weights of sugar.”

We talked all day about sugar and the methods of making it, and then (purely by way of parenthesis) I introduced the subject of sporting, which was my only object in visiting Wyaconda Bottom.

“Oh, yes! Wait till evening, and when night comes on you'll see something new that will astonish you. You shall judge for yourself. Be patient; wait for sunset, and I'll find a very good gun, and so on.”

About nightfall, when all the workmen were round the fire and eating their supper, we heard some strange noises in the maple plantation. At first they resembled the swell of the sea at a distance, and then growing more distinct as they came nearer, they were like the roaring and squealing of wild beasts. For all reply to my questions, my host pointed out a black object on the top of a high branch, about as large as a magpie's nest.

83

“What is that?” cried I.

“A 'coon,” he replied, “perched right within reach of your rifle.”

“Do you think so?”

“Certain. Just you try.”

I fired, and the creature fell within a few feet of us. The bullet had broken his shoulder blade and pierced the heart. It was a shot worthy of a better game. However, there was no lack of sport, for the maple-juice attracted them from all parts, and squirrels, opossums, racoons, and other four-footed thieves swarmed around; but their bright eyes were scarcely visible in the darkness when down they came, sometimes falling to my gun and sometimes to those of the men who were watching the sugar tubs. This queer sport went on far into the night, until at last I grew tired of it, and went peaceably to sleep side by side with my host. Next morning, on counting up the spoil, we found that we had bagged fourteen racoons, six opossums, and a cub bear. The last fell a victim just about daybreak to a lucky shot from one of the watchmen.

“Well,” said my host, next morning at breakfast, “and how have you been pleased with your sport last night?”

“Splendid,” I replied; “I wish I had nothing to do but set up my tent here with you and never die.”

“Well, well,” he replied, “many thanks for the preference; but I have promised to show you some G 2 84 fishing by torchlight, and I must keep my word. I'll give orders to my foreman to get everything in readiness for to-night, and after supper and some sport like that of last night (let us hope even better) I'll show you something that you won't easily forget.”

“Many thanks; but what fish are we going after, and where is your water?”

“About half a mile from here is a large stream called Dyots, which runs into the Little Rock river. Dyots is full of fish—they swarm like frogs in a marsh—salmon trout, and even salmon of immense size. About a week ago, my favourite nigger Samson, one of the

cleverest fishermen about, brought me a salmon of fifty pounds' weight, and I never eat a better fish, more pinky and flavorous. If we have luck to-night, you'll admit there's no better sport in the world."

During the day, I explored the neighbourhood of the Sugar Camp, accompanied by Mr. Bergeron, who took a pleasure in showing me the most picturesque places, pointing out the tracks of game, starting a hare from her form, flushing a brace of quails from the side of a path, and starting a buck with the sound of our footsteps, or a starling perched on the branch of a tree. Ten times during the course of our walk I fired at game which we came upon quite by chance, and I had the satisfaction of contributing to my host's larder a grey hare, five quails, and a large plump turkey. As for the buck, he was hit, 85 but not mortally, and he was found two days afterwards about half a mile off, picked clean by the wild beasts. The antlers and skeleton were all that remained of him.

At six o'clock, supper was served, and I enjoyed it all the more from the fact that I had provided the principal dish myself. As we chatted away night came on, and then Mr. Bergeron and I mounted on horseback, leaving the men in camp to enjoy their sport with the 'possums, &e. I took with me a capital gun by Manton, slung by a strap across the shoulders, in case of an attack by a bear or panther, and in so doing I followed the example of my host, who carried behind him a beautiful rifle, whose excellent qualities and precision he had frequently proved to me. On starting, our horses broke into a canter through the windings of the forest, and seemed to know their way to Dyots perfectly well. In a short time, we could see, in spite of the darkness, the liquid boundary which divided the saccharine territory of my new friend.

"Hulloa!" cried out Mr. Bergeron, making a speaking-trumpet of his hands, as soon as we reached the banks of the stream.

"Hi! Hi! Hi" came the answer, from three separate quarters.

“Come to order!” he vociferated, and in a moment there was a sound of oars approaching the bank, and directly afterwards a man came up to tell 86 us that all was in readiness to begin as soon as we pleased.

Before night had come on, a large net had been stretched across a part of the river which narrowed between some rocks. This was in order that the trout and salmon that escaped the perils of the torch-fishing should fall into the pockets of the seine, which was made like the esparto nets which the Marseilles fishermen use for the tunny fishing.

“All right,” quoth Mr. Bergeron, “let us tether up the horses and start.”

Samson, the fisherman, whose skill had been so highly spoken of by Mr. Bergeron, had made all the arrangements for the fishing party, and certainly I never witnessed such a spectacle. In our boat were my host and self, with five or six harpoons or spears. To the shaft of each of these was fastened a fine rope-yarn cord, as supple as a hank of silk. Mr. Bergeron then explained to me what we were going to do, and how it was to be done.

As soon as we had quietly rowed into the middle of the river, two negroes who had been posted on a small promontory which jutted out into the stream, lit a fire of fir cones, faggots, and dead wood, so as to produce a great deal of flame and very little smoke. At the bottom of our boat were heaped up about twenty torches, made of pine twigs twisted together and coated with resin. Whilst my host was explaining all this to me, Samson took up a 87 basket filled with maple-sugar waste, and threw it by handfuls into the stream. There is no better ground bait for the fish. I did not know that at the time, but I soon came to understand the value of those honied flakes, and the importance of the part they play in a nocturnal fishing expedition on the Dyots.

We glided on silently over the water, and when we reached the middle, remained motionless, waiting for the signal to commence operations. In the silence which pervaded the place, we could hear distinctly the voices, the cries, and the shouts of laughter of the

people at the Sugar Camp. Presently, however, came a whistle through the air, and a streak of flame lit up the scene.

“That's the signal,” whispered Mr. Bergeron; “the men will light the torches and we must each take a harpoon, taking care to fasten the rope to the wrist. I go to the prow and you to the boat's stern. Once there, look out, and take care not to shake the boat, for the slightest movement stirs up the water.”

I followed up his directions to the letter; for it is certain that, however little notice fish may take of the talking or singing of any body on the bank, the mere shock of a footstep will scatter far and wide in great alarm every fish that happens to be in the neighbourhood.

Obedient to my host's orders, Samson and Jupiter—a nigger whom my host familiarly nick-named 88 Jovis—lighted our two torches, and, following Mr. Bergeron's example, I posted myself at the stern of the boat. Leaning slightly forward and grasping my harpoon by the handle, I awaited the moment of action.

At first, dazzled by the reflection of the flame, I could perceive nothing whatever, for the surface of the water was not even disturbed by the motion of the boat. Presently, silvery flashes, phosphorescent sparks, began to be perceptible; these were little fishes attracted by the unexpected return of the light (which they mistook for that of day), and sporting about with entire faith in the fictitious sun. Soon the gleam of light became larger and larger, forms were seen moving about; these were the larger fishes, which advanced slowly, also attracted by curiosity. Gaining confidence from the example of the small fry, they swam forwards into the light, leaping and circling about, as if determined to have a good view of what was going on. In a short time, they were all swimming about near the surface very slowly, and moving their fins with a scarcely perceptible motion.

Directly under me, at about four yards' distance from the boat, I saw an enormous salmon of most desirable weight, and in a moment my spear whistled through the air plunging into the Dyots and spearing the prey, which struggled in vain to free itself from its hold. The

barbed iron was, however, too sure; 89 the fish reddened the water with its blood, and with the aid of one of the torch-bearers, I hoisted him on board, whilst Mr. Bergeron at the same moment landed the finest trout I saw in my life, whether in Europe or the United States. Thus we went on, my Canadian friend and myself, spearing about to right and left; but I must confess that all my attempts were not equally successful, for I had none of that certainty and skill which practice alone can give. Sometimes the spear went too far and missed the fish, and at others the fish managed to dodge me. Consequently there were alternations of success and failure, which betrayed themselves by exclamations of joy and oaths more deep than loud. Once, when I had thrown the spear with greater than common effort at the back of a gigantic fish, which was swimming proudly by on the larboard side of the boat, my foot slipped, and in I went a header, equally to my surprise and alarm.

To rise again to the surface and stretch forth an arm towards Samson that he might extricate me from the danger, was the work of an instant; but when I had got all but within reach, and hands were about to grasp the friendly gaff which was to pull me on board, to my great astonishment I felt a tug at my other arm which drew me the other way. I then bethought me of the cord which was fastened to my spear; it was the fish transfixed upon its barb that was dragging me after it. Fortunately, 90 Samson pulled a couple of strokes with the oars, and seized me with a potent and a friendly grasp. It was high time, for I was not a good swimmer, and in a few minutes more should have found myself a passenger on Charon's boat, with nothing but a fish to offer him for my passage-money; unless, indeed, he would have agreed to accept my purse containing some thirty dollars of United States paper, which I am afraid would have scarcely satisfied him. Thanks, however, to Samson, I was rescued, and lost no time in putting on the suit of dry clothes which I had provided myself with in case of accident.

This mishap was soon over and quite as soon forgotten, for feeling the necessity of a little additional exercise to make me warm, I set to work again with redoubled zeal; and I am happy to say that my nocturnal cold bath had neither then, nor at a subsequent time, any ill effects. In this fashion, Mr. Bergeron and I continued fishing as long as the supply of

torches lasted; but about eleven o'clock the moon rose, and it was useless to continue our harpoon sport. The time had now arrived for drawing the net which had been placed across the channel of the Dyots. Obedient to a signal given by Samson and Mr. Bergeron, another boat quitted the shore and came to join us. It was manned by men from the sugar camp, who, imitating ourselves, rowed onwards, beating the water with gaffs and 91 oars, as fiercely as if Xerxes were flagellating another Hellespont. Whilst flogging the water in this manner, we rowed onwards towards the net, and could perceive by the light of the fire upon the rock the pieces of cork which were there to keep the net floating dancing in a very significant manner. Four stout fellows stood, two on either bank of the Dyots, holding the ropes of the net, and ready to draw it upon a signal from Mr. Bergeron.

“We shall have a splendid haul,” cried he; “look there! Don't it look like a sail bellied out with the wind, and ready to burst. Now, boys; one, two, three.”

The four men dragged at the ropes at the word of command, and presently the net made its appearance at the surface full of fish. There they were struggling and writhing about; for all the world like “fish out of water;” trout of all sizes, and salmon, some hanging to the net by their gills, and others in the purses of the net. In truth it was a “miraculous draught;” for on counting the take we found that there were a hundred and twenty-two trouts of different sizes and fifty-seven salmon, varying from five or six and twenty pounds to seven or eight. The total weight of the catch was over seven hundred and fifty pounds.

By this time, the moon was shining in full splendour, and the brilliant goddess lighted us on our way back to the Sugar Camp, where Mr. Bergeron 92 and I arrived about two o'clock in the morning thoroughly fagged, but delighted with our torch-fishing expedition—I especially, who had never taken part in anything of the kind before.

The reader will easily believe that the remainder of the time I spent at Wyaconda Bottom slipped by very pleasantly. Every morning, I started off upon some shooting or fishing expedition, sometimes alone, but usually accompanied by my host; and in the evening

we resumed the strange sport of shooting the game which came to seek us, without ever stirring from the side of the fire.

“Well,” said Mr. Bergeron,” when he had brought me back to Chicago, “you've not been too much bored at my forest hut.”

“By no means,” was my reply, “and I have to return my best thanks for your hospitality.”

“Nay, 'tis I who am obliged to you, my good friend, for you've helped to kill a great many of those confounded brutes who eat up so much of my sugar; besides, I don't mind telling you, my friend, that the harvest has not been a bad one, and the result in cash not to be despised.”

“Would it be a rude question to ask what may be the average produce of the crop at Wyaconda Bottom?”

“Certainly not; I make no secret of it. That farm, which don't cost a penny to keep, brings me in a clear income of about 1,500 *l.* , and that without 93 counting the furs and skins of every kind which I sell to the American Fur Association, and the fish from the Dyots, which I have salted and smoked for my men. And now, whenever it suits you to come and pay me another visit, I shall be much obliged to you for the kindness.”

I am almost ashamed to confess my neglect, but although this was sixteen years ago, I have neither seen nor heard anything more of the farmer of Wyaconda Bottom.

VI.—A STORY OF SIX SHARKS.

There is an old story that Marshal Saxe's cook once dressed his top boots with a sharp sauce, and made them so good that he eat them. This may have been true; but I would have defied him to do the same with a shark.

Unless you happen to be a South Carolinan or a Floridan nigger, you will agree with me that nothing can be more detestable than a steak of this voracious *Squalus* , even though Carême himself, Chevet, Potel, or Chabot did their best to serve it with a sauce made of the purest Aix olive oil, and the best tarragon *Moutarde de Mailleé.* *

* I have been assured that the meat of young sharks found in the belly of the mother is highly esteemed by amateurs, but I must confess that the idea of eating them under such circumstances is repugnant to me.

94

And yet although every sailor whose palate has not been destroyed by the use of rum and tobacco, will agree with me in this,—a school of mackerel or of herrings, or a shoal of dories, does not cause half so much delight among the crew as the appearance of a single shark. I may add, as some explanation of this, that this monster causes among the sailors a feeling of hatred not difficult to understand, for they have all sworn pitiless war and no quarter against the brute. Some authors have seriously maintained that the French name of the brute (*requin*) is derived from *requiem;* but others maintain that the word is of Scandinavian origin, which seems much more rational. In Norway, the shark is called *Kaakierring* (a dog that snaps and bites). My readers must choose for themselves which of the two derivations they prefer. But whatever the derivation of the name may be, the sailors have no need to decide, before conceiving the most intense hatred against that hideous companion, who, like those birds of prey which attend armies on the march to feed upon the corpses which are left behind, follows in the wake of ships in the hope that chance and the sea may bring a human meal within its reach. Besides this, the shark does not turn up its nose at any odds-and-ends 95 that the cook or crew may throw over the vessel's side.

A reverend Jesuit, Father Labat, who seems to have lived on terms of intimacy with the sharks of his time, declares that sharks most decidedly prefer black men's flesh to that of the white, because it is more savoury and highly flavoured. He also adds that the creature

gives a preference to Englishmen over Frenchmen. For all this, I should not advise a Frenchman to trust implicitly to this preference of the sharks. It may be that the sharks of the nineteenth century have not preserved the manners and customs of their ancestors.

One day, I happened to be on a voyage from New York to Boston, in a sloop manned by a jolly crew. We started from the Battery Quay at six o'clock in the evening, so as to take advantage of the flood tide to get up the East River, pass Hellgate, and so into the open sea by Long Island. At dawn, we found ourselves at sea, sailing in the direction of Newport, when the look-out man gave notice of a shark. On this, a sailor seized an enormous hook, strong enough to hold a shark, baited it with a lump of pork, and threw it in the sea. The sailors, full of delight and expectation, called out to each other, “Hey, lads! come and have a look. Here, you Carroll, Neal, Reuben, and Sam! Won't we give him a breakfast?”

“D—n him; he's as big as Jonah's whale.”

“Lord! what a gullet!”

“Gently, my lad! Don't shove so; there's room for everybody.”

“There now, he's on his back. He'll bite. No, he's only sniffed at it.”

“Well, he's had a taste and liked it. There he is again.”

“Belay there, and don't shove. One would think some one had stolen your grog. Look out, my sea dogs, and be ready to haul.”

A deep silence followed this order of the bo'sen, who superintended the operation. Ten of the crew crowded to the side, ready to haul in the line as soon as the common enemy was fairly caught. One held an axe, and another a rope made like a lasso, with a slip-knot to pass over the fins of the monster; whilst a third rove the line through a pulley, and the

rest passed it from hand to hand. As for the captain, the mate, and your humble servant, we stood in the shrouds, leaning over the side, and looking on with curiosity at the catch, whilst three passengers, and a gentleman from Massachusetts looked out at the port-holes, and took the greatest interest in the capture of the shark.

Whilst this was passing, the shark, with better luck than management, had bitten at the hook without being caught. The excitement now became intense, but not a word was spoken by any one but the 97 bo'sen, who cried: “Never fear, he'll have it yet; he's got all sails set, and 'll take the hook after he's eaten the bacon. Hup! there he is;” and in fact, the monster, whose greediness had got the better of his prudence, had snapped at the hook and delivered himself up with fins and tail bound to the crew of the good sloop *Triumphant* . At this, a general huzza was raised, and the crew was in an ecstasy of delight. He was hauled out of the sea, and the top-man who held the slip-knot passed it with marvellous dexterity over the body of the shark, whose terrific struggles shook the whole ship, and excited general hilarity. After many efforts, they succeeded in getting him over a port on the main deck, and he fell heavily in the midst of the spectators who made way for him for fear of being struck by his powerful tail. The sailor who had the hatchet then gave him a powerful blow in the belly, and put it out of his power to do any further mischief. This shark was seventeen feet long, and was justly reckoned a very large specimen; for, according to the captain and sailors, sharks very rarely measure more than from twelve to fifteen feet. All beyond that are exceptional. The weight of our prize was about two thousand pounds, and when the last struggles were over I could examine it at leisure, study it, count the number of its teeth, and the conformation of its jaws and fins. Then it was that I understood how the shark would be the scourge of the seas if nature had enabled it to VOL. II H 98 satisfy its voracity at its pleasure. The fearful opening of the jaws, armed with hooks as sharp as needles, is placed a foot below the muzzle, and with the help of a stick I managed to prize open the vice which death had tightened, so as to examine the interior form of that inhospitable receptacle for any living thing. I managed this with great caution, for I recollected an old college friend of my father telling me that his father, a captain from

Marseilles, having one day been so imprudent as to put his hand into the jaw of a shark that had been cut to pieces, had so lacerated the skin and flesh that he was obliged to have his arm amputated at the wrist.

God, whose works are all good, has compelled the shark to push his prey before him, so that he must turn over and seize it lying on his back. This necessity has an advantage, inasmuch as it gives a chance of escape to the fish or man who is being pursued, if they can only preserve their presence of mind in the time of danger.

The jaws of the captured shark were furnished with six rows of teeth, so arranged, that no sooner is one lost, than immediately another is pushed forward to replace it. These teeth are very hard, triangular, sharp, and serrated at the edges like a saw. Those in the first row protrude forward, whilst the second and third rows are turned inwards. The eyes, which are very small, and quite round, are placed on each side of the head, and seem only fitted 99 for following a prey which understands how to defend itself, and attempt to escape its foe. But what are more terrible than even the teeth are the tail and fins of the shark, which are very long, and firm and elastic as a bar of steel.

The crew of the *Triumphant* , growing out of patience with my very prolonged inspection of their game, were beginning to grumble, when I became aware of the presence of the cook armed with a long knife. This he plunged into the still palpitating body of the fish, and began cutting it to pieces, as if it had been a sheep or a calf. His skin was shared among the sailors, for it has a certain value with cabinet-makers and turners, to polish wood withal. The heart torn from this shark palpitated for hours after the creature had been cut up, and even three days afterwards convulsive movements were perceptible. I should not have believed this if I had not seen it with my own eyes. The head was carefully cut off, and placed in a bucket, in which it was steeped, preparatory to its being cooked. This tid-bit is usually offered to the captain; but this time it was destined for me, and I was also informed by the mate that I was expected to “wash down my head” in the orthodox fashion.

The shark's flesh was served up as a stew, and in a fricassee; it was fried, served *en matelote* , and with all kinds of sauces. I tasted them all religiously; H 2 100 but I must confess that I could not bring myself to like it anyhow. Even the sailors fought very shy of it I noticed, and some of them confessed to me in confidence that what had the greatest tendency to make them partial to a dinner of shark's flesh, was the double allowance of liquor which they received upon every occasion of catching a shark. Moreover, it was a slight change from the eternal salt pork of the ship's bill of fare.

The head of the Newport shark figured a long time in my bachelor's crib at New York; but before leaving for Europe, I made a present of it to my friend Russell, one of the best advocates there, and one of the brightest ornaments of the American bar, and I am sure that he still has it in remembrance of me.*

* In the middle ages, the jewellers used to mount sharks' teeth in silver, as simple country folk believed them to be charms against fever. The niggers in North America have kept up the custom; only they mount them in gold.

There are three kinds of sharks. The commonest is the grey, and there is the blue shark, and the hammer-headed shark. The least dangerous is the blue shark, and yet I had an awkward adventure with these brutes on the shores of New Jersey, where I was once spending the summer.

A friend and I had sailed out with an experienced fisherman of the coast to enjoy the sport of fishing for blue fish—a kind of catfish of very delicate flavour and as abundant on the American coasts 101 as sardines are in the Bay of Biscay, or sprats in the North Sea. In spite of all our efforts, the fish would not bite, although we tried bait of all kinds; and yet we could feel constantly that violent convulsion of the line which announces the presence of a fish, but which we vainly sought to account for. We changed our place twenty times; but still the same thing. At last the captain of the boat seized me by the arm, and said (with as tragic an air as if he were acting in a melodrama), “Look down there!”

“What is it? A kraken, or a sea-serpent?”

“No—and yet it is something quite as bad.”

“What?”

“A shark.”

“All the better,” said I; “the brute shall pay for all the blue fishes he has frightened away.”

My companion, who was a little bit of a Miss Molly, objected that we had nothing to do with shark-fisliing, and that we should be running a risk without any advantage.

“I'll answer for everything,” chimed in the fisherman. “Here is a line that will do very well; only instead of trying to pull him on board, which might upset the boat, we must drown him.”

“Drown him! And how?”

“You shall see.”

Everybody knows the voracity of the shark. He will swallow whatever is thrown at him. This one 102 was evidently ready for anything, for he rose to the surface of the water, and sported about like a tunny fish or bonito. My friend turned pale with fright, for the monster was from twenty to twenty-two feet long. In a very short time, he had swallowed a bushel of cabbage stumps, carrot tops, and peashucks, which we had brought out as bait for the blue fish, and we were at a loss how to manage him, when our fisherman caught hold of a little bottle which had contained a pint of brandy, and threw it in the water, when it was swallowed up in a moment by the shark.

“Ha! Ha!” cried he, “the rascal has a good appetite, and we'll soon have him. Here's a bit of ham, gentlemen. Can you spare this for the shark?”

“By all means.”

On this, the fisherman baited a large hook, which was furnished with a strong wire snood, to the lump of Cincinnati ham, and threw it out fastened to an inch and a quarter rope. He let the line pay out, so as to bring the ham close to the nose of the shark, but, contrary to that voracious habit which makes them snap up everything, our friend turned over and over and smelt at the hook without snapping at it. At last, however, he made up his mind, turned himself upon his back, or rather upon his side, and the hook disappeared down his throat. At the same moment, our fisherman gave a violent 103 tug at the line, so as to fix the barb in the jaws of the monster. The shock which followed this pull assured us that our game was firmly hooked, and we gave utterance to a cheer, which our shark responded to by a violent blow of the tail. Then began the difficulty of the whole operation. The line had to be so managed as never to be allowed either to slacken or to become taut, and the fisherman played the shark so well, that in a quarter of an hour the monster was wearied out, and could be drawn to the side of the boat, motionless, by the assistance of a gaff. When there, a single blow of his tail could have smashed in our boat, but he hadn't it in him, and after a brief and ineffectual struggle the fisherman passed a slip-knot over his gills, took him in tow, and made all-sail towards land.

As soon as we got ashore, we hauled the monster up upon the sand, where, after a few ineffectual struggles, he speedily died. The fisherman, however; by way of precaution fastened his tail up tightly, and placed a bar of iron in his mouth, so that he could neither strike nor bite. On opening the belly of this shark, we found, to our horror, the leg of a negro which had evidently been freshly torn off, and next day we learnt, from the journals, that a horrible accident had happened on board a ship coming from Norfolk. A negro sailor was bathing when the ship was moored off New Jersey, 104 at about a mile from where we were fishing, when he saw a shark below him. He cried out to his comrades for help, and a rope was thrown, which he succeeded in fastening under his arms; but just at the moment when he was being hoisted out of the water, the monster had snapped

at his thigh, and cut it off as clean as if it had been done with a knife.* The sailor died in consequence of the hæmorrhage. After burying these human remains, we continued our researches among the contents of the shark, and our astonishment may be imagined when we found a knife and an entire pine-apple. The brute had breakfasted upon fruit, and supped on a negro. The only puzzle was, how the knife got inside him. Perhaps he required it to cut up the pineapple.

* The shark is very greedy of human flesh. The majority of sailors declare that it is fonder of black flesh than of white, and that the sense of smell is so strongly developed in this fish that slave-ships are always followed by large numbers of sharks. One thing is certain, that if the sharks have a great fondness for negroes, the negroes have a mortal hatred against the sharks. When a negro sees a shark, he dives underneath him with a knife in his hand, and rips his belly open. The blacks of Carolina are very skilful in killing sharks, and I knew one, who belonged to Mr. Hammerford (a few miles from Charleston), who had ripped up about thirty-three sharks, and upon whom his fellows had bestowed the name of “Shark Killer.”

The third shark the death of which I witnessed had found his way into New York Bay alongside the island. I had gone to Governor's Island to pay a visit to an officer of the American army who was stationed at the fort, when, suddenly, in the midst 105 of our conversation, we heard a number of screams intermingled with bursts of laughter. Captain Scott opened the window which faced a small creek which was opposite the fort, and we saw a dozen soldiers, some throwing lassoes and others harpoons into the water, wherein was a fish of strange form and extraordinary size.

“The men have taken a shark prisoner,” cried the captain; “and that's the fifteenth this month.”

“By Jove!”

“I wish it were the last; for we can't get into the water without danger, and, considering what warm weather it is, that is rather a bore.”*

* New York Bay, and the major part of the creeks of the Atlantic, are so infested with sharks as to render any shore-bathing dangerous. The presence of these horrible brutes in the American ports is attributed to the abundance of food collected there.

“Let us go and have a look at the shark,” said I to my friend.

“If you please. Moreover, I am rather curious to know how the men send a shark to sea.”

“Send it to sea! Are they going to let it free then?”

“Not exactly. Come and see for yourself.”

A few moments afterwards, Captain Scott and myself were on the shore of the little bay in which the shark was struggling with the soldiers. One of these, after many failures, had succeeded in getting a rope around its tail; with this, he had managed to fix a couple of casks to it, which the shark was 106 towing. This was a plan which the soldiers had borrowed from the French sailors.

It was high tide, and Governor's Island Bay was full of water. The “sending to sea” was therefore easy enough. Off swam the shark, paddling slowly with his fins, and with the two casks after him. He seemed by no means satisfied with the work he had to do, and like a convict no doubt hoped to get rid of his fetters. In this, however, he was disappointed, for three days afterwards the fishermen in Manhattan Bay brought the news to New York that a shark had been found drowned with two empty casks fastened to his tail. The brute had swum sixty miles before succumbing to his fate.

I have now to relate my fourth adventure, in which I had to encounter three sharks. I have already stated that sharks abound on the coasts of the United States, but the monsters

who frequent those parts are even more hideous than their European congeners. It is a peculiarity worthy of remark that the pilot-fish that accompany the European sharks abandon those which frequent the North American waters.* It is said that the American

* In the Mediterranean, and on the shores of Europe, the shark is always accompanied by two or three fish of about a foot long, with black stripes around the body, and very often holding on to the shark. They are called pilot-fish, because they frequently precede and seem to guide the shark. The voracious brute, which swallows up all other fish, appears to respect its little friends. Pilot-fish have been hauled aboard, attached to sharks which have been caught. During a voyage to India, a captain from Charleston saw a pilot-fish jumping after an enormous shark which his crew had caught. It followed the vessel for two hours, and only seemed to abandon the pursuit when it had lost all hope of regaining its comrade. It occasionally happens that small fish are found upon sharks, called *suckers*, because they are so firmly fixed to the skin of the brute that they can only be detached with difficulty.

107 shark *even devours its friends* , and for that reason no fish will venture near it. One day, I nearly fell a victim to three of these terrible monsters; and I will conclude this chapter with an account of that horrible adventure.

Not far from Beaufort, on the coast of South Carolina, there is a sand-bank, a tongue of alluvium jutting out into the sea. The people of the neighbourhood call it Egg's Bank, for it is there that the fish which frequent the waters in those parts come to deposit their ova. At high tide, this bank is covered with water, but whilst the tempest rages nothing can be more picturesque than to see the waves foaming and seething upon the bar. Frequently, when the weather was calm and the tide low, I accompanied one of Mr. Elliot's blacks on the sand-bank for the purpose of spearing fish, and I caught a large number of basse and halibut. One day, the warmth of the atmosphere prompted me to enjoy a foot-bath, and taking the hand of my friend's slave I walked into the water waist-deep, and waded to the sand-bank. There I remained without thinking of the matter until the tide had almost covered Egg's Bank. Cain had thought no more than I had of the necessity for returning

to dry land, when, 108 suddenly, he uttered a cry of terror. I turned round, and judge my surprise when I perceived within a few yards of us—between the sand-bank and myself—an enormous shark, swimming towards us with the greatest rapidity.

“Give me my harpoon,” I cried to Cain; “don't leave me for a moment.”

“O Lor!” cried Cain, “here's another shark on the other side.”

On turning round, guess my consternation at perceiving that instead of two there were three sharks, cruising round as if they had made a solemn compact of partnership. No doubt it was the presence of Cain and of the bait for the fish that had attracted the monsters. “If these sharks attack us,” said I, “we are lost; let us be bold, and we may escape.” I gave my orders to Cain and advanced, with my harpoon, against the first shark, which I struck sharply on the head, at the same time holloaing loudly, my voice being accompanied by Cain's, who was nearly wild with terror. This plan succeeded; for the sharks swam off into the deep waters, and we regained the coast without ever looking behind us.

109

VII.—THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES.

I do not suppose that the history of Newfoundland* is well known to the majority of my readers,

* Newfoundland is celebrated for its fisheries and for its breed of dogs. It is an island which measures 300 miles from north to south, and whose medium width (which is to the east) is 200 miles. It is 1000 miles in circumference, 36,000 in superficies, and measures about 3,000,000 acres in excess of Ireland. Deducting, however, the size of its interior lakes, it is not equal to the size of that island. Its form is that of an irregular triangle, with its base to the south. The island is narrower where it approaches the north. The western side is

straighter than the other coasts, although it is interrupted in several places. The whole of the eastern side is broken up into bays, capes, islands, and promontories.

Cape Race is at the southern extremity of the island, in 46° 40 north latitude, and 53° 5# west longitude of Greenwich. It is a place of the greatest importance to navigators, for it is the nearest to Europe of all American soil. It is 1636 miles from Ireland, and about half the distance between New York and Liverpool. All the northern steamers which travel between the United States and Great Britain pass in sight of that Cape. If, after doubling Cape Race, you steer eastward, you come into the splendid bays of Conception, Trinity, and Bonavista; continuing westward, you reach Exploit Bay, Notre-Dame Bay, and White Bay. To the north are Orange, Hare, and Pistolet Bays, as well as a great many smaller ones. In the interior of the island are six or seven large lakes, from twenty to fifty miles long, and a large number of smaller ones, whence the waters flow to the sea. The principal town and best port is St. John, on the southern part of the eastern side, between Tor Bay to the north, and Bull's Bay to the south. The mouth is so well fortified that the strongest naval forces might be set at defiance. In time of war, an enormous chain is placed across the port, rendering all navigation impossible. The town of St. John is built at the upper end of the port, and has been gradually raised above the sea. The houses are mostly built of wood, and the streets are narrow and irregularly constructed. At least one-half of the population is composed of fishermen.

The Newfoundlanders number 100,000; half are descended from the French, and the rest from the English. More than half the population is Catholic; a fact which explains the large number of Irish established in the island. The Established Churches of England and Scotland, and the Methodists, have also zealous missionaries, and schools are attached to their churches, which receive numerous children.

110 and it is for this reason that I wish to preface the account which I have to give of an excursion which I made to the fisheries of Newfoundland, with an historical account of that

Anglo-French possession which was discovered by the celebrated Venetian, Jean Cabot, in 1497.

Properly considered, Newfoundland should be for Great Britain one of the great props of its maritime strength; yet it is strange that the ignorance of the English has prevented them from deriving from their “new-found-land” all the advantage which they should have done, and that no one ever dreamt of colonising the island until more than a hundred years after its discovery. The traveller Hore, who visited this place about 1536 (that is to say, about nine-and-thirty years after the visit of Cabot), nearly perished with famine,—he and his companions, although the fish must have been swarming around them. The island could only boast of sixty-two colonists in 1612, and there were probably not more than fifty fishing boats there at the time.

The French only began to fish for cod in 1540, after Francis I. had ordered the exploration of Newfoundland, 111 first of all by J. Verazzoni, and then by Jacques Cartier, of St. Malo, the greatest seaman of his time. The establishments which they formed upon the coasts did not enjoy all the success which was expected of them, and it was only under the reign of Henri IV. that the prime-minister Sully favoured the cod-fishery by placing it under the immediate protection of the government. Even the English did not acquire their celebrated preponderance in the North Sea before the celebrated Drake had driven the Spaniards thence, and their taking possession of Newfoundland dates only from 1585.

Corte Royal, the Portuguese, had observed an extraordinary quantity of cod upon the Newfoundland bank about the commencement of the sixteenth century. He first gave notice to the European fishermen of the fecundity of these waters. The Spaniards attributed the discovery to Estaban de Gomez, who was named the king's pilot by a royal decree, dated Valladolid, the 10th February, 1525, and who went afterwards to seek the North-West passage. Some of the sailors of the old continent claim the honour of having fished there at least a century before the discovery of America, but there is no ground for these pretensions. The documents on the subject which have been collected and quoted

in that handsome and important work the “Collection of Travels and Discoveries of the Spaniards,” published by Don Navarete, prove that they fished 112 on the Newfoundland banks before the voyages of Corte Royal or Gomez. In the archives of Simancas are papers of the Queen Juana, among which is a licence from the king her father to Ivan Ayamonte, a Catalan by birth, authorising him to go and make researches on the shores of Newfoundland (*para irà saber el secreto de la Tierra Neuva*).

The English (who help themselves to whatever they can get) suddenly laid claim, one fine morning, to the territorial jurisdiction of the entire island. A great many attempts at colonisation took place in consequence, and the first which succeeded took place in 1623, and was headed by Sir George Calvert, who became grantee of the province of Maryland. In 1633, an Irish colony arrived in Newfoundland, and was followed in 1654 by English emigrants. At the same time, the French, who had founded a colony at Placentia, claimed Newfoundland as part of New France, and persisted bravely in continuing the fishing.

In the two great wars which England waged against France, and which terminated by the Peace of Utrecht, the principal difficulties concerning America were Hudson's Bay, Newfoundland, and the district called Acadia by the French, and New Scotland by the English. It is not so much the present value of these colonies which makes them so much sought after, as the possible value of the fisheries and the trade in fur. The dispute ended in 113 favour of the English, who retained the exclusive possession of Hudson's Bay. New Scotland was given up to them, and the southern and eastern coasts of Newfoundland, as well as the entire territorial jurisdiction of the island. This treaty, however, guaranteed to the French the exclusive occupation of the *fisheries* on the eastern coasts of the island, from Cape Bonavista to the southern point, and from thence on the western coast to Cape Rich, without giving them the right to set upon the coast any erections but fishermen's huts and magazines.

The peace of 1783 gave to France the exclusive right to fish on the coast of Newfoundland, from Cape St. John, on the east coast, a little to the north of 50° north

latitude, up to the Strait of Belle Isle, including the western coast of Newfoundland down to Cape Bay, at the extreme southwest of the island. The same rights (and also those over the islands of Miquelon and of St. Pierre) have been confirmed to France by the treaty signed at Paris in 1814.

During the two long wars with England, the French fisheries had been entirely destroyed; but they were resumed immediately after the peace, and were encouraged and increased by the bonuses offered by the government. The French law offered a bonus of fifty francs (2 *l.*) for each man of the crew that dried its fish on the Newfoundland coast, and VOL. II. I 114 thirty francs per man for those which brought the uncured fish to France. Moreover, the fish coming from the French fisheries and exported abroad, fetched a price varying from twelve to twenty francs per two hundred and twenty pounds.

Let us now look at the English. Their policy has been lately to treat Newfoundland not like a colony or an establishment, but as a fishing station, for the benefit of those English merchants who pursued the business. According to the evidence of a witness who appeared before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1793: “Newfoundland has been considered in the light of a great English vessel moored on to the banks during the fishing season, for the convenience of the English fishermen. The governor is regarded as the captain of the ship, and all those who are concerned in the fishery form the crew, and are subject to maritime discipline.”

An officer of the island, who gave evidence before that Committee, complained warmly that women were prevented from disembarking on the island. The English Government denied this; but it was believed for all that. During the war of the French Republic the English fishery became very prosperous, and the fish of Newfoundland attained an enormous price. In 1814, 1,200,000 hundredweight of fish were worth more than £2,500,000. The peace of 1815 ruinously modified the price of fish, and the hundredweight fell gradually down to even twelve 115 shillings. The English fishery seemed about to expire, so nearly was the great fishery destroyed, which had been supported by English

capital on so great a scale. The cod-fishery of Newfoundland was reduced to that which it remains at this moment—shore-fishery in the neighbourhood of the ports, or near the coasts, or by means of boats, with five men per smack. In addition to this, there are vessels of from 50 to 200 tons, that take seals on the ice between March and April, and fish for salmon and cod on the shores of Labrador.

The population of the island having augmented to something near 100,000 souls, and the place being no longer considered a station for the English fishery, there has been a change of policy. The Newfoundlanders have been permitted to establish farms on their island, a concession very propitious to agriculture; and in 1833 the British Parliament allowed the island to have a legislative assembly.

The Newfoundland cod-fishery has gradually revived, and now yields about a million hundred-weight of fish per annum; but the inhabitants still view with envy the superior prosperity of their French rivals. Serious charges have been adduced as to their encroachments on the English fisheries, principally in the neighbourhood of Belle Isle Strait, and in spite of the activity displayed there by the English ships of war, a colonial navy has been established to watch over intruders, and complaints I 2 116 have been made for several years past against American fishermen for poaching in those waters.

To prevent collisions which would otherwise be inevitable, and to define exactly the rights of France, the two governments have agreed to a treaty, giving to the French the exclusive right to fish and make use of a part of the shore (for the purposes of the fishery) during the season between the 15th of April and the 15th of October. The boundaries are from Cape St. John to Cape Norman on the north, with five ports named in the treaty, and a distance of three miles round the west coast. The French and English have equal rights over all the rest of the west coast, and as for the use of the shore to dry the fish, the former enjoy the sole right on the northern half, and the latter on the southern half. The line of demarcation is at Cape Rock, and the shore-right extends to the third of a mile English, calculated from high-watermark. The right includes the privilege of cutting wood, but forbids the erection

of any building which is not absolutely necessary for the fishery. France is also equally entitled to fish for and preserve cod at the north of Belle Isle, and for eighty miles along the coasts of Labrador, between White Sands and Cape Charles, but only on those parts of the coast which are unoccupied.

The French are, moreover, entitled to purchase bait on the south coast of Newfoundland, on the 117 same terms as the English fisherman, without being subjected (as has been attempted) to taxes and duties. It has been agreed, that in the event of their being prevented from purchasing the bait for two seasons, they shall have the right to prepare it for themselves within a certain limit. The same stipulations are in force with regard to the French, who are authorised to pass the winter in Newfoundland, to keep watch over the security of their vessels, and of their fishing apparatus; but there is a formal agreement that there shall not be more than three persons to each mile of coast, and that these persons shall be subject to all the laws of the country.

I should observe that this treaty was by no means approved of by the inhabitants of the English colony, who contended that the common right ceded to France as regards Belle Isle and Labrador, was even superior to an exclusive right, and that the effect of the treaty would be to convert Newfoundland into a French colony, by banishing from it the English and the natives, and planting there the French. Nothing, however, has resulted from this storm in a tea-cup, and according to the latest information within my knowledge, all is proceeding very much to the advantage of Newfoundland.

It was not so, however, in 1849, when I visited the Newfoundland fisheries. About that time, some American vessels had got up a quarrel with the inhabitants, and Captain Wilson of the brig-of-war, 118 *Montcalm* (U.S. Navy), was ordered to St. John to see to the matter, and arrange it as much as possible to the benefit of his co-citizens. I know not how the notion came into my head to accompany Captain Wilson, who very kindly offered me a berth on board in the officers' cabin; but this I know, that on the evening before the

departure of the *Montcalm* , I said “yes” to the Captain's offer, and enrolled myself as one of his crew for a fifteen or twenty days' voyage.

I pass over our journey from Boston to Saint Pierre, which is the first part of Newfoundland that comes in sight. What struck me most during the passage, which was favoured with the best of weather, was the enormous quantity of fish to be seen in the waters. These inhabitants of the sea, like birds of strong flight, were gifted with a power of swimming which enabled them to clear long distances with great celerity, and as they passed through the water they were constantly meeting with something to be swallowed without the necessity of stopping for a moment. They darted round our vessel and leapt out of the water like living flashes of silver. I examined with minute attention the light and brilliant bonitos (*Thynnus Pelamys*) balancing themselves on the waves, and the pilot-fish (*Naucrates ductor*) swimming round the vessel and sporting in the foam. The tunny-fish were in shoals, and the sport of fishing for them was the great delight of 119 the crew, for the presence of that fish is regarded as an omen of excellent augury by the sailors. They were the forerunners of a favourable wind, and came bounding over the waters as if to salute the *Montcalm* , plunging under her keel and crossing her path backwards and forwards with ceaseless evolutions. Behind us, in our track, came the terrible shark, ready to swallow up whatever chance might throw within his reach.

On the fifth morning after we started, the man on the watch called out “Land!” and we were at Newfoundland. Captain Wilson hoisted the star-spangled banner and saluted with a broadside, which was duly replied to by Fort St. John. We then disembarked and paid a visit to the governor. There is no need to recount the details of our piscatorial difficulty (which, thanks to the good intentions of both parties, was soon arranged), but to return at once—not to my sheep—but to my fish.

I had come to Newfoundland to see the place, and to give an account of the cod-fishery, and as we had four clear days at St. John's, I took advantage of them to explore the fishery and take notes.

My first expedition was to a French vessel called the *Sainte Marie* , which was stationed about a league from St. John's, at a place which (as I was informed) is one of the best on the coasts of Newfoundland. It was a ship of a hundred tons, manned by twelve men, all first-rate seamen and experienced 120 fishermen. The provisions of the ship were simple, but of excellent quality. Spirits were almost entirely forbidden on board, and beef, salt pork, and biscuit formed the ordinary bill-of-fare. As for the clothing of the crew, it was of warm stuffs, with over-jackets, breeches made of double cloth soaked in oil and water-proof, large sea-boots, round hats tarred and waxed, leathern gloves, and woollen shirts. The hold of the ship was filled with casks of different sizes; some containing salt, others empty and ready to receive the oil to be extracted from the cod-fish. The wages of the men varied from three to four pounds per month, according to their ability.

I soon obtained from the captain (whose name was Simon) permission to be present at one day's fishing with his crew. At three in the morning I was to breakfast on board and start in the pinnace with the best fishermen he had on board. I arrived at the appointed hour, and breakfasted with the crew. It was a comfortable repast; coffee, bread, and meat. After this, we provided ourselves with what was necessary for the day, and then set out.

“Now then, lads,” cried Captain Simon, “off with you, and I wish you a good day's fishing.” On this, I slid down the rope-ladder into the pinnace with four sailors, whilst the other boats received their crews, and then we started for the bank where the cod-fish were to be found. As soon as we arrived there the boats anchored within short distances of 121 each other, in from ten to twenty feet of water, and then the fishing began.

Each man bad two lines, and two stationed themselves at the bow of each boat and two at the stern, back to back. The lines were leaded, and the fish bit almost as soon as the lead touched the bottom. Then the man pulled up the fish as fast as be could, and throwing it over a round bar of iron behind him, the weight of its body disengaged the hook, and, the bait being either put back again or renewed, in went the line again. This operation being constantly repeated, the bottom of the boat was soon alive with cod-fish, and the fishing

went on with a rapidity which seemed to me to be marvellous. All day, my four shipmates never ceased talking. They talked of everything; fishing, making love, domestic matters, and even politics; sometimes a good Gallic joke escaped their lips, followed by a hearty Gallic laugh. One of the brave fellows was a Breton sailor from Morlaix, and he gave me some interesting details as to the cod-fishery on the French coast, which seemed to me important enough to be noted down.

It appears that on the French coast more than four hundred vessels are occupied with the cod-fishery, and over two hundred are employed in fetching and carrying, and in the other operations necessary for carrying on the fishery. From this it would appear that about seven hundred sail and 122 eighteen thousand sailors are maintained by this fishery,—or something like one fourth of the actual muster of the maritime “inscription”—a precious reserve of power, always serviceable, hardened to the roughest service, in the stormiest seas and the worst climate, useful for the commercial navy in time of peace, and available for the navy in time of war. The produce of the French cod-fishery is about 60,000 tons of fish, of which about one third is exported to Italy and Spain. The home consumption absorbs the remainder.

The Newfoundland cod-fishery has always occupied the first rank; for it employs the greatest number of sailors, and vessels of every size, from thirty to three hundred and fifty tons. When a vessel arrives at the coast early in June, the crew disembark with all things on board and establish themselves in wooden huts on the shore, where they lie by until after the winter-season. Then they go out every morning in boats (two men and a boy in each) to fish with the line, and remain out all day until evening. Besides these fishing-boats, each vessel is furnished with one or more net-boats, which take ten men to man them, and are only used when the fish is abundant. On the return of the boats, the fish is cut up, salted, and packed, and after it has been for several days in the salt, it is taken out and laid upon the beach by the boys, until it is sufficiently dried. The fishermen quit the

coast at the 123 end of September, some returning to France and others with a cargo of cod to the West Indies.

The fishery at St. Pierre and at the islands of Miquelon resembles that on the Newfoundland coast, only it is carried on in flat boats called wherries or pirogues. There are from two to three thousand of these, managed with sail and oar, and manned by two men each. They go out in the morning, and return in the evening. There are three classes of persons who devote themselves to the cod-fishery and to the preparation of the fish: 1st, the native fishermen, to the number of a thousand to eleven hundred; 2ndly, the winter fishermen, who come to pass the season, or stay there for several years,—the number of these does not exceed five hundred; 3rdly, the *birds of passage* , who come every year from France, and return at the end of the season; these number from three to four hundred. The cod-fishery and the preparation of the fish are the only occupations on the islands of St. Pierre and the Miquelons, and supply full employment for all the wintering-fishermen and the greater part of the inhabitants, men, women, and children. The fishery begins about the month of April, and lasts until the middle of October. It is generally very abundant, and produces small fish, as on the Newfoundland coast.

The fishery on the Great Bank is carried on by vessels of from a hundred and twenty to three hundred tons, furnished with two long boats. From 124 sixteen to twenty men are requisite for the management of the ship and boats. They start from France between the 1st and 15th of March, and the ships repair at once to St. Pierre, where the passenger-fishermen are landed. The lads and apprentices fill up the number on board, and it is their business to look after the work of drying the fish on shore. The crew then set sail for the Bank, and cast anchor in forty to fifty fathoms of water. The fishing-boats are then launched, and every night, manned, by five men each, they go to lay the long trot lines, each furnished with five hundred hooks. Every morning the lines are drawn, and the fish opened, washed, salted, and laid on board in the hold. The rest of the crew remaining on board fish with bottom lines. The first fishing-season ended (which is from the 15th to the 30th of June), the catch is taken to St. Pierre to be dried, whilst the vessel, furnished with

a fresh supply of salt and bait, returns to the Bank for a second fishery. Occasionally there is even a third crop, and that is taken to France, salted only and not dried. The fishing on the Great Bank is much harder work and far more dangerous than that on the coast. It demands experienced sailors and brave men, for it is carried on in a sea which is never at rest. The loss of men and boats is frequent, on account of the squalls and fogs. The coast-fishery forms sailors, but the Bank-fishery hardens them.

125

The morning having been spent in the way which I have attempted to describe, and in listening to the yarns of the men (often very instructive), as soon as our boat was full and would hold no more, we returned to the *Sainte Marie.* There the captain and four men had arranged long tables, with barrels of salt by the side. The interior of the ship was cleared of all but the salt requisite for the preliminary operations, and as soon as the cod-fish were brought upon deck the work of opening and curing commenced. The first operator cut off the fish's head with a single stroke, and threw the head overboard; then opening the upper part of the belly with a cut, he passed the fish on to his neighbour, who removed the entrails, took out the liver, which he threw into a barrel, and then pitched the remainder into the sea. A third sailor passed his knife under the back-bone, separating it from the flesh, and then threw the fish down the hatchway. There were the salters, who rubbed the fish well with salt, and packed it into barrels. This went on until all the fish had run the gauntlet from the knife of the first operator to the salt hands of the men down in the hold.

After witnessing the barrelling for a good half hour, I felt that I had seen enough of that part of the work, and requested Captain Simon to allow me to see a little of the net-fishing.* The very evening

* A large net about three fathoms deep, leaded and corked.

126 before, a signal had been received from Newfound-land, announcing the arrival of immense shoals of capelin in all the bays, followed by cod, which are very fond of this easy prey. They literally lined the shores in compact masses.

It requires six men to draw a seine, one end of which is fastened to the shore by a rope, and the other is taken out in such a manner as to sweep the largest possible space. When the manœuvre of enclosing a half-circle has been completed, two fishermen draw the net to land by the aid of a capstan, whilst the four others remain in the boat and keep up the net, beating the water with their oars, so as to frighten the fish from jumping over the edge. I dare say some will suppose that I am romancing, but at the risk of that (only entreating my readers to verify my statements by competent authority), I declare that I saw a single haul consisting of three thousand eight hundred and seventeen fish, without counting small fry.

In the evening, I returned on board the *Montcalm* wonderstruck, for it seemed to me as if I had really witnessed “the miraculous draught of fishes.”

Next day was Sunday, and Captain Wilson took me to Grande Miquelon, where there were several fellow-countrymen to be visited, and the day after we dined with the Governor of Newfoundland at St. John's. On leaving the house of that worthy functionary, an inhabitant of the country who had 127 been dining with us, proposed to take us to a ball. “A ball?” cried we. “Certainly, gentlemen; come along.”

After threading for some time the maze of streets which lies around the fort, we arrived before a wooden house, over the threshold of which a flickering lantern was placed, apparently to attract the passers-by. The red glass which adorned the copper framework of the lantern reminded me of the lamps over a police-station at home; but at the end of a passage with a damp and sticky floor was an immense room lighted up with Chinese lanterns of coloured paper, and a few candles stuck against the walls. To the right, was a black and smoky chimney, and on the shelf above a row of pots of all sizes and shapes. To the left, a number of culinary arrangements, and a row of wooden benches ran all round the walls of the apartment. These were for the accommodation of the “young ladies” of the neighbourhood, some of whom had already arrived, plump even to expansiveness, and clad in garments which dazzled, if they did not delight the eye. To say the truth, one

might have imagined oneself among the *squaws* in one of the great wigwams of the Far West. Gradually the room grew fuller of “ladies” and “gentlemen” fishermen, and then the dance began,—a dance which had nothing remarkable, beyond those peculiar contortions which distinguish the *cancan* of some of the popular Parisian 128 ball-rooms. Every time the musicians paused (there were but a fiddle and a clarinet), the fishermen and their partners ran to one of the corners of the room for a *whet* , which consisted of a glass of rum, and which the ladies swallowed without the slightest objection.

Altogether, it was a curious spectacle, yet scarcely worth the rest which we should have sacrificed to it, through folly and gaiety of heart, had we remained much longer in society where we were really out of place. I was glad therefore when Captain Wilson proposed to me that we should beat an honourable retreat, and in another hour we were sleeping our best in our berths on board the *Montcalm.*

Next morning, Captain Wilson hoisted the American flag, and fired a salute, which was answered by the fort; and then, all sails set, we returned towards Boston, which we reached before a capfull of wind.

Captain Wilson died five years ago whilst doubling Cape Horn, carried overboard by a sea. May God rest his soul!

129

VIII.—THE WILD BOARS OF THE OCEAN.

Of all the fishes which gastronomy has pronounced to be proper to be eaten by man—a compliment which certain inhabitants of the deep return in kind whenever they get the chance—the tunny* is the largest, the best, and the most nutritious.

* The tunny (*Scomber Thynnus*) belongs to that family of *Scomberidœ* which has been so well described by Linnæus, Cuvier, and Lacépède. Its flesh is compact, close-grained, and in some parts almost black, and the flavour is more like that of animal food than that

of any other inhabitant of the sea. On the back it is blue-black, silvery on the belly; near the dorsal fin are ten golden stripes, and upon the anal fins from six to eight iridescent zigzags. This fish weighs ordinarily from 80 to 200 pounds, but occasionally attains much more gigantic proportions. Aldrovandi mentions a tunny which was 32 feet long and 16 feet round at its largest circumference. It was captured near Gibraltar in 1565. In the work of that author, *De Piscibus*, there is an engraving representing this tunny, on the back of which is represented a fleet of ships reaching from the tail to the gills. In Sardinia, on the coasts of Italy, and in the islands of Majorca and Minorca, the tunny fish is salted just like the cod. Thus prepared, it is sold in Spain, Italy, and even in Barbary; but at Marseilles it is marinaded, or soaked, in *virgin* olive oil—a sauce which is almost unknown in Paris, and which is never to be found anywhere in winter. It resembles flakes of saffron snow. Every part of the tunny is good to eat; but the favourite part is the belly, which is justly reputed to be the most delicate in flavour, and is sold at a higher price than the rest.

These qualifications (the first especially) may be occasionally exaggerated, but as a Provençal, who knows what fish is, I maintain them stoutly. Away from the coast, we only know the tunny steeped in oil VOL. II. K 130 and sealed up carefully in a bottle. Under these circumstances, it is lucky if we do not have palmed upon us a piece of boiled veal dressed with Provençal sauce.

Some years ago, in Paris, the late proprietor of the Provençal bazaar (of facetious memory) offered to epicures a certain tunny pie during Lent; but I must confess that, having been one day persuaded to make an experiment of this confection, I was laid up and could take nothing but spoon-meat for twenty-four hours. One man only, Ouillet-Raymondet, the celebrated pastry-cook of the Carrefour de Buci, has initiated the Parisians into the veritable delights of tunny pie. Let us hope that the day is not far distant when we shall see this admirable fish regularly sold in our markets, and that our cooks will learn how to serve it as it should be served, either smothered in truffle sauce, or cold, with a *rémoulade.* It will be an immense accession to our Parisian gastronomy.

The tunny is a great traveller, like the sardine, the herring, and the mackerel. He is fond of making long journeys, and every year he starts from the coasts which he frequents regular excursion trains for the west of Europe, the African coast, Spain, and Italy; also to the coasts of the New World, from Cape Cod to Florida. I have little doubt that tunny may also be found in the Indian Seas; but of this I have no certain knowledge.

131

Whence come the tunnies? Where do they remain during the winter months? I know not, and I have not met with anybody who is able to answer that question. Pliny and other ancient naturalists (in whose knowledge I must confess I have but slender confidence) assign to them as a winter residence the Sea of Azof, the *Palus Meotides* of the ancients. The modern ichthyologists declare that they come from the open sea, and that whilst some penetrate the Mediterranean by the Straits of Gibraltar—making the tour of the coast, from Tetuan to Tunis, and so on to Alexandria, Constantinople, and then the Black Sea and the Sea of Azof, returning in considerably diminished numbers by Greece, Illyria, and Italy, France and Spain—others strike off bravely towards the American coasts, and spread themselves from the West Indies to the mainland. However that may be (wherever these giant fish get to in winter), it is certain that as soon as fine weather returns the tunnies re-appear on the surface, and delight the astonished eyes of the fishermen. There can be no doubt that these fish are attracted to our shores by the *sea-acorns* , which grow every spring in every bay. This marked taste of the tunny for the sea-acorn has earned for it in France the name of *Cochin maritime* , and in the States that of the “Wild Boar of the Ocean.” The principal cause of this peculiar predilection is, in my opinion, the opportunity afforded to deposit their ova securely in those masses K 2 132 of weed which a steamer can with difficulty force its way through. Differing from other fish of the same family, the tunnies avoid the mouths of rivers, possibly because their instinct has taught them that the current will carry their ova into the open sea. It is upon the coasts, beside rocks and among sea-weeds, that the female lays her eggs, concealing herself so as to avoid observation. The tunnies always move about in numerous troops, following the track

of a ship when the occasion presents itself, and taking advantage of the shadow which it projects, as also of scraps or other waifs that may be thrown overboard. Many a time have I seen shoals of them, arranged in the form of an immense parallelogram, manœuvring about in a fashion that would not have disgraced a regiment of soldiers. Experienced fishermen declare that they proceed with such regularity that, by counting them as rank and file, you may ascertain, within a very few, the number of the whole shoal.

Tunnies must never be looked for in calm weather; but when the wind freshens, and the sea is furrowed, the shoals of tunnies may be seen defying wind and water, but always keeping within a short distance of the land.

For the benefit of those who are likely to have an opportunity of enjoying the sport, I will record the means used by the fishermen of France, Navarre, Spain, and the United States, for capturing this 133 giant of edible fishes. Before they found out how to catch them in shoals, the fishermen of every country had only the harpoon to work with. After that, the first engine devised by the fishermen was the *train* ,—a net stretched some sixty yards from the shore, so as to be drawn landward by a large double rope fastened to the further end. The main drawback of this train-net was that it only captured about one-tenth of the shoal, whilst it effectually frightened the rest.

During the night (a dark night was best) a boat, with several fishermen in it, would set sail for the place where a shoal of tunnies had been seen at sunset. If rowing were necessary, the oars were muffled, and when the place was reached, the net, corked and leaded, was quietly paid out, and as soon as the whole train was shot, the boat turned about, rowing round to the left, without letting go of the net, so as to encircle the tunnies, the fishermen beating the water as Xerxes flogged the sea, and halloaing out so as to frighten the tunnies, who, not knowing what had happened to them, became scattered about, and entangled themselves in the meshes of the net, which the fishermen gradually drew towards the shore by the end ropes. Once landed, the take was usually found to be very remunerative.

Appian relates that, in his time, the fishermen had invented a net, which (judging from his description) 134 must have greatly resembled the nets used in tunny fishing,—a large net with “walls” and purses, a regular submarine maze, from which the fish, when once fairly enclosed, could seldom escape. Whether the fishermen of our day ever read Appian, either in the original or through a translation, I cannot affirm positively, though I much doubt it; this I do know, however, that the first who employed the Provençal drag, or American *pig-catcher* , renouncing the use of the harpoon, did so after this fashion. The tunny never travels alone. He never turns back, but always goes straight forward. In fact, he is a “regular go-ahead Yankee.” If he meets with any obstacle in his way, instead of trying to break through or get over it, he merely swims round it, when a single blow of his tail would perhaps free him. This fact once understood, the inventive fisherman could easily take advantage of the habit of the tunny in order to catch him. He had only to make an immense net to present a kind of wall, and to secure it so with anchors and ropes that it could be stretched out far into the sea. This kind of arrangement has not been materially altered since the day when it was first invented. The tunnies find their way into the labyrinth, and become entangled in the first enmeshed enclosure, from which there is no escape but into the second, and that again leads to a third, and so on, to the fourth and last, which is nothing but an enormous bag, secured to 135 the bottom by anchors and stones, so that nothing can escape through its meshes.*

* Such of my readers as would like to examine these nets without going to the United States, need proceed no farther than Marseilles, which (thanks to the railroad) is not very far off; in that corner of the Mediterranean which you come upon after quitting the admirable tunnel of the Montagne de la Nerthe—a work worthy of the Romans, and which crowns the fine railway which connects Lyons with Marseilles. When the traveller opens his eyes after emerging from this, and the Mediterranean first meets his view, he is dazzled and fascinated by the spectacle of that vast sheet of water sparkling in the sun. The liquid plain bathes the bases of lofty mountains, whose sides are covered with pine forests, and fields in which the branches of the olive and the vine are intertwined, all

flourishing with the most vigorous vegetable health, and in spite of the natural aridness of a soil which the agriculturist has rescued from whins, sage, and wild thyme.

You arrive at Marseilles, and after a few more turns of the wheel you are at the station. Already you perceive the hill of Notre Dame de la Garde, and beneath it the Imperial château, protected by the batteries of Fort St. Jean. Towards the west lies the sea, bordered on the horizon by the Château d'If, towering over the islands of Pomègue and Ratonneau.

But before quitting the station of St. Charles, over the walls of the Marseilles country-houses you will see the hill on which stands the château of M. Foresta, bordering on the sea, and a few cables' length from the Château Vert—the first restaurant in France—and Marseilles. Here is the great system of nets which has been constructed by the powerful and venerated Fishermen's Company of this great City on the Sea. It is no small matter to keep in good repair those immense nets which are exposed to all the damage of the weather, to the attacks of sharks and other sea-monsters, whose proceedings are the reverse of pacific as soon as they find themselves entrapped within the treacherous meshes, but break through every obstacle that opposes them. Nothing but the wealth of a great nobleman or the joint-stock purse of a company could suffice to meet the accidental expenses which arise, not to mention the capital required for the ordinary working. The municipality of Marseilles grants the site for the *mandrague* (as it is called) for ten, fifteen, and even twenty years. This privilege, which is of great value, has been withdrawn since 1851 from a great number of *concessionaires*, on the pretext that the nets interfered with the navigation. If this objection had been taken in the case of the navigation of a river, I could have understood it; but I must confess that, as it regards the sea, it appears to me somewhat chimerical. For my part, I vote for the fishermen of Marseilles. Like a true epicure, I am fond of tunny—a delicacy which the epicures of that city would be very sorry to be deprived of.

This then is how the fishermen proceed in working these nets. The tunny fishing is carried on twice a day, evening and in the morning before sunrise. Often during the early years of my youth I awoke about three o'clock in the morning, and went to the part of the beach where some of the fishermen were waiting for me. I used to get into the boat of the master-pilot, who led the party, and which was followed by three other boats.

The thing to be done was to find out the shoal of tunnies, so as to drive them among the nets, and this was generally soon done. Directly we saw them bounding over the crests of the waves, the four boats advanced upon them so as to drive them along the nearest wall of the net, whence they were conducted from chamber to chamber into the bastille or prison of the net. And then, what delight it was to see the beauties, with perhaps one or two exceptions, entangle themselves within the inextricable intricacies of the nets. We would chase them with shouts of triumph; for the more noise made, the more readily did the fish fall into the snare. At length, the tunnies were all captive, when all that remained to be done was to get them into the 137 four boats. Then, at the word of command, the two largest boats drew up on either side of the middle chamber or purse, which four men forthwith began to haul up towards the surface of the water. There they were, fluttering about with their blue backs, without the slightest suspicion of the fate which awaited them. That was the difficult job, to get the fish into the bottom of the biggest boat, without letting any of them drop back into the sea. The fishermen, however, who were generally speaking very strong and skilful, would seize them by the tail, lifting them with Herculean force, and dash them at the bottom of the boat, where they would lie struggling and palpitating in the last agony. As soon as this operation was completed, the net was replaced at the bottom of the water, and once more secured by its anchors, and to its weights of lead and stone; after which the boats returned to Marseilles, where the prey was handed over to those strapping women-porters in petticoats, who carry the fish to market.

During the past century, the pleasure of tunny fishing was a sport almost as much in vogue as racing is in our own days. Every wealthy family possessed a handsome boat, in which,

accompanied by friends, they would follow the tunny fishers; and the starting of the boats, adorned with bright flags and streamers, and crowded with youth and beauty, added to the beautiful aspect of the sea and the 138 balsamic odours of its shores, the freshness of the atmosphere, and the gentle heat of the sun, whose rays gilded every wave, offered to the sight and to the senses a spectacle which inspired Joseph Vernet to paint one of his most highly esteemed marine pictures. In our times, the *mandragues* of Marseilles have fewer visitors than when the celebrated painter produced that remarkable painting, which is one of the most admired in the collection of the Louvre—and yet the fashion, which had been discontinued for many years, is gradually returning to the shores of the Mediterranean. in the United States, the tunny fishing is one of the most popular on the shores of the Atlantic. Not only do the fishermen by profession give themselves up to the sport of a tunny hunt, but there are amateurs who keep nets, resembling those of the Mediterranean, near their properties.

One of the latter, a Mexican Spaniard, who retired to the United States in 1838, to escape the dangers of the *pronunciamenti* , Don Alvear Manoel Alfenares, a rich planter in South Carolina, struck up an intimate acquaintance with me at the Baths of Newport. There I met him in 1842, and I received a letter from him one morning, inviting me to spend a few weeks at his estate at Winyan Bay, not far from Savannah. “Do come, I beg, my dear sir,” wrote he; “my two daughters and myself will be delighted to do the honours of our habitation, and I hope my 139 son will return from Havannah in time to show you some sport.”

The invitation was too friendly to be refused, so I begged a short holiday of my editor, and started one fine morning by the Southern Railway. Three days afterwards, I was at the plantation of Don Manoel, and one must have experienced the hospitable treatment and the care which the visitor receives in these far-off homes, where the host is the friend and the guest the brother, to understand the feelings which they engender. Although it is fifteen years ago, I remember as if it were yesterday, those two beautiful creole girls dressed in white, who came out, holding each other by the hand, to receive me under the verandah

of the house at Winyan Bay, and offering their cheeks for a chaste salute, without prudery and without false shame, and then gently compelling me to be seated, whilst one took possession of my Panama hat, and the other of my walking-stick.

“Your room is quite ready,” said Peppina.

“And a bath,” added Rosita.

“You are now one of the family,” chimed in the worthy host, bursting out upon us. “I am delighted to see you. To tell you the truth, I scarcely expected you, for the French are often readier to promise than to perform. However, you are an exception to the rule. Now you must go to your room, and I will give orders to my man Ryno to attend you. It's half-past twelve; so 140 you'll take your bath and siesta until four. You will then find us here. However, you must do as you like. Liberty is the motto here.”

At the hour agreed upon, I rejoined my host and his family, thoroughly refreshed by the bath and rest. Peppina and Rosita had dressed themselves for the occasion most beautifully and becomingly; the former in a yellow silk dress, covered with black lace, and the other in rose-coloured China satin, with black velvet trimmings. In their black and shining locks was no ornament but the flowers of the pomegranate.

I pass over the details of the dinner, which was delicious, and of the evening, which passed in singing, chatting, and arranging a thousand plans. It is only necessary to record that, just as we were about to think of retiring, a timid voice was heard from under the piazza, saying, “Massa!” It was one of Don Manoel's negroes.

“Ah! is that you. Tybald? What's the matter at this time of night?”

“Jess come up from the fishery, massa, and the tunnies are come, and there'll be capital fishing tomorrow.”

“Give Tybald a piastre and a bottle of treaclerum,” cried Don Manoel, “for his good news. The tunnies were never more welcome in Winyan Bay, for they will amuse our guest. So good night, Tybald; be here to-morrow morning at six o'clock, 141 and we'll start for the fishery directly after breakfast.”

Next morning I was up with the dawn, and having donned a costume of irreproachable white, stole out into the garden to enjoy a cigar, and not without a hope of meeting my charming hostesses. In this, however, I was doomed to disappointment, for Don Manoel sallied out presently with a “What! up already? I see you're eager for the sport. Come along to breakfast, for my daughters are waiting for us in the dining-room.” Sure enough, there were the young ladies seated before the sacramental chocolate pot, which they milled until it foamed again, to make the beverage all the better.

That business over, my host gave orders for a pair of horses to be harnessed to a very comfortable American *char-à-banc* , in which we all took our seats, and the black coachman drove his cattle at a good pace along a wide road through the forest, which was shaded by lofty trees and shrubs which loaded the air with a thousand scents. The road soon coasted the sea and seemed short enough, owing no doubt to the agreeable company in which I was. In half-an-hour, we arrived at the bay where the fishery of Don Manoel was situated.

Like the *mandragues* of the Mediterranean, the walls of the net all led towards a central chamber, in which (according to Tybald) half a dozen tunnies were already entangled. “But,” added he, “we 142 shall have a crowd by-and-by. There are three boats driving 'em, and they have twice signalled good lack. Look there, massa!” Looking in the direction indicated by the negro, we could perceive a flag hoisted on the mast of one of the boats, of a colour which was understood to presage success, and presently Tybald drew our attention to a number of black spots on the waves. “Here come de pigs!” cried he. The tunnies were in sight, and grew more and more visible every moment.

They advanced almost in order of battle in large numbers, as if prepared to charge through whatever opposed them. Fortunately, however, the nets were strong, and as the fish came on they turned along the walls into the central chamber until the net was quite full, and the tunnies that remained outside had nothing for it but to regain the open sea in the best way they could.

This was the moment for witnessing the miraculous draught,—that is, the raising of the central chamber—a solemn operation for the fishermen of Winyan Bay, and Don Manoel's state-barge, c, rowed by four oarsmen, brought us to the spot in a very few minutes. During this time, the three fishing-boats had come up and were preparing for the capture.

“Now, boys,” cried Don Manoel, “go ahead, and don't let a single one escape.”

On hearing this, the fishermen set to work and 143 drew up the net, in which were flapping about thirty-two tunnies of various sizes. The blacks are very ready at all kinds of sport, but they seldom invent anything new. The plan of seizing the tunnies by the tail and throwing them to the bottom of the boat was exactly the same as that followed at Marseilles.

Some of the fish measured at least a yard and a half in length. According to custom, they were all taken to Savannah market, except four, which were reserved for the master's house, and I can assure the reader that on tasting the fish, as dressed by my host's cook, with a sauce *au gumbo,* it seemed to me one of the most delicious dishes I ever partook of in my life.

During the first week of my residence at Winyan Bay, I made the acquaintance of the two charming young men to whom Peppina and Rosita were betrothed, a circumstance which may perhaps account for the fact that I am still a bachelor. Joking apart, however, every medal has its reverses. A month of pleasure passed by—too short, alas!—the hour of return arrived, and one morning I found myself once more on the railroad being whirled

back again to New York, deeply regretting the necessity which compelled me to quit such amiable friends.

War Department Library. 144

IX.—THE GIANTS OF LABRADOR.

I shall not be teaching my readers much when I remind them that the whale is the largest known animal in creation, and that it is the giant of the sea, just as the elephant is of the land. The right whale, the first of the *Cetacea* , measures from forty-five to a hundred feet in length; yet certain travellers have been guilty of the exaggeration of assigning double these dimensions to individuals seen by themselves in distant seas, and upon unknown shores. One hundred feet is, however, a very respectable length, and I prefer to stop at that.

In the month of February, 1848, three large vessels were moored alongside each other against one of the wharfs on the East River, waiting for the favourable moment when they could quit the bay and set sail for the whale fishery. One morning, having nothing better to do, I mounted the rope-ladder which hung over the larboard side of one of them, and with the permission of the captain, who was quietly smoking his pipe on the quarter-deck, I asked a sailor to show me over the interior of the floating-house.

It was a large three-master, of five hundred tons burden, fitted with care, and evidently intended to brave the roughest weather and the ice-floes of 145 the Arctic circle. The crew consisted of thirty-two men, each appointed to his separate duties, and *two* captains, one of whom superintended the sailing of the vessel to the place of fishing, and the other taking charge of the catching and preparing the whales. The sailor who conducted me and showed me every detail (thinking it necessary even to explore the stinking hold of the ship), explained to me that there was not the slightest rivalry between the two chiefs of the expedition, but they were “two good twins,”—a phrase which he constantly repeated. After these were four officers, including mates and surgeon, a first-rate carpenter, two coopers,

a blacksmith, two cooks (one for the officers and the other for the crew), and twenty-two sailors. On the deck of the vessel I found slung from iron stanchions six whale-boats, and a seventh behind the forecastle. The cabins of the captains and officers were furnished in a style of the most primitive simplicity, when compared with the fitting-up of other ships which I had visited in port.

“Aboard a whaler,” said my guide, “luxuries are useless. You must get accustomed to be soaked in oil. Easy-chairs are all very well for the gents who travel in steamers, or for amateur merchant-men.”

From this I gathered that the whaling sailor has no great admiration for other kinds of sailors.

“As soon as ever we're at sea,” he continued Vol. II L 146 “every man in the ship knows his place.” A captain, harpooner, and four oarsmen are appointed for every boat. Each harpooner receives twenty harpoons, six spears, two cutting spades, a hatchet, two knives, a good stock of handles for harpoons, spears, and spades, and a sufficient quantity of the line or thin strong cord, which is so indispensable in the fishing. As the ship approaches the fishing-ground where it expects to meet with the whales, the crew is constantly engaged in making preparations, and especially in fitting up the whale-boats, which are regarded, each by its particular crew, with affectionate solicitude. The whale-boat is the most necessary of all the implements, for everything depends on it. This is why the whalers can never exercise too much care with regard to it, or be too particular about providing it with everything needful to keep it in good case.

After the boat, the next most important matter is the harpoon. My guide placed in my hands an iron dart, the barb forming an obtuse angle of about a hundred and twenty degrees, and with sharp cutting edges about three inches long. I had never seen a more terrible weapon for its purpose. The third side of the triangle, about six lines thick, is fastened by the middle to an iron branch of exceeding suppleness, in which is fixed the

handle, whereby the harpoon is thrown. The metal should be of such temper that it will bend in every direction, but 147 never break, and a few blows of a hammer should suffice to straighten it, even when twisted up like a corkscrew.

When I had seen and examined everything fully, I slipped half a dollar into the hand of my guide, and regained the deck. Here I found the “two good twins” seated before a well-stocked table, and making a hearty breakfast on the poop.

“Well, sir, do you think you know what a whaleship is now?” asked the captain, when I had first of all advanced.

“I think so,” I replied. “As a journalist and a foreigner, I pick up all the information I can, and now, with the exception of actually seeing a whale caught (which I have never had the good luck to do), I think I know all about it.”

“Ah! then you're a journalist, sir?” asked the other captain.

“Yes, sir. I belong to the *New York Herald.* ”

“Ho! ho! Pray be seated, sir.”

I have already made mention of the deference and respect which is manifested towards the Press in America. The “twins” of the *Jackson* (that was the name of the whaler) soon made me welcome. I breakfasted with my new friends, and left them with a promise to pay them another visit on board whenever I pleased. The fact was, these captains were very good fellows, and I soon found myself quite at home in their company. L 2

148

One evening after this, I was alone in the office of the newspaper, writing some “copy” for which the printers were waiting, when a tap came to the door of my *sanctum.*

“Come in,” said I; and then entered one of the pilots of the port, who asked whether I belonged to the staff of the paper.

“Certainly, my good fellow; and what good news have *you* brought us?”

“Well, sir, it's news that'll be like to make a noise in town to-morrow morning.”

“What is it?”

“This afternoon, about three o'clock, a large whale stranded on the north end of Long Island.”

“Nonsense! A whale! Why, it's impossible.”

“It's the truth, I assure you, and a ‘right whale,’ too.”*

* The head of a “right whale” measures nearly one-fourth of his whole length. Two canals or vents, reaching from the depths of the jaw to the top of the skull, enable the creature to breathe and spurt forth the water which enters its throat. The double column of water may be seen six miles off, rising to a height of twenty feet above the level of the sea. The man on the watch then signals a whale, and the ship is steered in that direction.

The aperture of the mouth of the “right whale” is large enough to allow a man to pass down it. The upper jaw is furnished on both sides with an apparatus of from four to five hundred *fins,* the parallel, flexible trips which are known as whalebone. Each fin is fixed by the upper end to the gum, which it traverses, and is embedded in the bone; but as there is a fringe of hair attached to the concave edge of the fins which protrudes beyond the lips, the large blades of whalebone which supply the place of teeth in the whale are improperly termed beards. The whale has no teeth, and does not masticate. It feeds only upon very small fish, and upon mollusks.

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Nature has bestowed upon the whale swimming fins of a force and structure proportioned to its size, not composed of bones connected with each other by membranes, but of bones articulated like those in a man's hand. An enormous tail, laid horizontally and not vertically (as the tails of ordinary fishes are), completes the locomotive apparatus of the whale. The enormous layer of fat which envelopes the monster greatly enlarges the volume of its body, and keeps the water at a convenient distance from the blood, which, without it, would be chilled. It also serves to preserve the natural heat of the creature.

The Cachelot (*Macrocephalus*) is less powerful than the “right whale,” and, although frequently of greater length, is always less bulky. It is even more prized by the fishermen. It differs considerably from the “right whale.” Its lower jaw is furnished with conical teeth, somewhat bent backwards, the exterior of which has the colour and hardness of ivory, but when they are deprived of their enamel they are softer and not so white. The sailors, who utilize every part of the Cachelot whale, prize them greatly.

The whalers hold in inferior estimation the hump-backed whales (*Megaptera*) and the fin-backed whales (*Balœnoptera*), for they give much less oil than the “right whales” and the Cachelots. For all that, however, when there is nothing better in the way they will hunt the blowing-whale, albeit he is not more than twenty feet long by seven or eight round. The last-named whale, be it observed, produces a single barrel of first-rate oil.

For a long time it was supposed that there was only one species of “right whale,” and this error was persisted in until M. Delalande brought to the Museum of Natural History the complete skeleton of one of these creatures taken in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope, and gave M. Cuvier an opportunity of describing the remarkable distinctions which exist between the northern and the southern whale. The points of difference, as regards the osseous structure, consist principally in the joining of the seven cervical vertebræ, and in the additional two pairs of ribs.

The head of the southern whale is much more depressed than that of the northern; its pectoral fins are longer and more pointed; the lobes of its tail are more indented. The whale-fishermen all agree in the opinion that it is sensibly smaller than the Arctic whale, its ordinary dimensions being from forty to fifty feet long.

It would seem that the equator forms, in some sort, a line of demarcation between the domains of the northern and those of the southern whale; but it may be easily supposed that all observations with regard to the giant of the ocean must necessarily be somewhat inexact.

149

At first I could not believe the man's story, but he was apparently in his right mind, and spoke with so much confidence that (reserving the power of being able to say next day, “we were wrongly informed”) I wrote the “par,” which I sent to the printer, with the last “slips” of my article. After this, I went home, but about midnight it suddenly occurred to me to go on board the *Jackson* 150 and inform my friends of what was going on at the end of Long Island.

Everybody on board was asleep, except the man on the watch, whom I hailed at once, telling him that I had something to say to his officers. The cautious sailor lit up the binnacle lamp, and giving me a hand up to the deck, went to wake up the two “twins,” who at once asked me down into their cabin. Their astonishment when I told them the pilot's news was immense.

“Good gracious!” cried the first. “If we could start at once!”

“Why not? Let's make all ready without saying a word to anybody. At daybreak we''ll get our papers all in order, and whoever goes to the Custom-house can get aboard as the ship drops down the bay to Sandy Hook.”

151

So it was arranged. The crew was summoned on deck, and were ordered to get ready to start “upon urgent business.”

“Get ready!” cried the supercargo, “why, we've no provisions on board.”

“No matter; it's only a three days' job, and we've enough for that. Get new bread at daybreak and whatever else we want. Come, lads, to work and with a will.”

At break of day the *Jackson* was in the river, dropping down slowly with the tide. The second captain was on shore getting the necessary papers for the excursion, and by ten o'clock he came on board in a boat which he had taken at the Battery, followed by your humble servant, who had determined to seize so favourable an occasion for seeing a little whale-fishing.

The wind was favourable to us, for it blew a fair sou'-west as we passed the Quarantine and Fort Hamilton. Beyond Sandy Hook there was a sea running, and an hour afterwards we were sweeping the end of Long Island with our glasses, in search of the monster which was supposed to be stranded.

At last, on the end of a kind of sandy cape at the extreme point of the island, we could see a black speck lying between two little islets. We were looking at this kind of ink-spot upon the sea, when suddenly a sailor up in the shrouds sang out with a stentorian voice the words which stir the heart of 152 every true whaler, however accustomed he may be to hear them—“ *A whale! A right whale! There she blows!* ” There he was, sure enough, the monster whose arrival had been announced to me by the pilot. Stranded on the bank, whither he had arrived from the seas of Labrador, attracted by some unknown cause, the monster (sick perhaps, and unable to make further way) had given himself up to the chapter of accidents. The tide had left him dry the evening before, but with the flow he had got once more afloat and was trying to find his way into the open sea.

I should have mentioned that the crew of the *Jackson* had been informed of the object of the voyage as soon as the ship had got into the middle of New York Bay; there was great excitement, therefore, as soon as the whale was signalled. It was something more than spoil to be taken possession of: it was a combat about to commence.

The ship advanced and was soon within a cannon-shot of the giant of Labrador, who was throwing up two spouts of water through his vents, and seemed to be in excellent case, for the moment at any rate.

“To your boats,” cried the captain who had the management of the capture; and every man was at his post and the whale-boats were lowered into the sea. The captains of the boats took the helms; the harpooners in front arranged their formidable weapons, rowing at the same time; and the flotilla 153 started in chase of the monster, who, directly he saw his enemies, turned tail and fled in the most cowardly manner.

It was a beautiful sight, and from the shrouds of the *Jackson* I could see every incident in the combat.

One of the whale-boats got ahead of the rest, and the captain who steered it encouraged the harpooner by words and gestures. Presently the implement of death was brandished aloft by the executioner of the *Jackson;* it whistled through the air and entered the side of the monster.

Immediately the whale was struck, he began lashing about fearfully with his tail, flapping his fins with rage. If one of these blows had struck the boat, it must have crushed it as if it had been of pasteboard. But instead of attacking, the monster evidently only thought of flight, dragging after him the victorious whale-boat by the harpoon which was fast in his body, and which was fastened by the line through a ring in the boat. Presently the whale dived, and when it came up again the sea was reddened with his blood. The struggle

lasted for three quarters of an hour, and at last he rose to the surface to draw his last breath, and lay there in the agonies of death.

A few minutes afterwards, the captain steered the boat alongside the whale, and finished him by plunging a long hand-spear, as sharp as a razor, into the 154 part which corresponds with the lungs. As he did this the boat was pushed off; for the death-struggles of the monster, whose vents were now spouting blood as an hour before they had spouted water, were to be dreaded. The whale rolled his massive bulk about and feebly defended the little life which remained to him. To hasten his end, the other boats came up cautiously and attacked him with harpoons, spears, and sharp spades, aiming chiefly at the tail, where the larger blood-vessels lie.

By a happy chance, no accident happened in capturing this giant of Labrador. Sometimes it happens that a whale-boat and all its crew will be dragged by the monster to the bottom of the sea, and at other times the boat will be thrown up into the air by the whale rising immediately beneath it.

At length, the whale breathed his last, as the huzzas on board all the whale-boats informed us. We replied lustily from the *Jackson,* which had approached the scene of the battle as close as possible. And now another task commenced. The boats were hoisted up into their places, and the ship was brought alongside the whale, which was made fast by a chain from the starboard quarter. The monster was more than half the length of the vessel. The sails were now brailed up by the captains' orders, and two anchors cast. Next morning, the operation of cutting-up was to take place.

All the preparations being completed, we sat down 155 to dinner in a style that betokened something of a festival. Every man had double rations, and there was grog galore. Presently pipes were lit, and there were songs all over the vessel. It was a fine moonlight night, and we enjoyed a fête which I shall not easily forget. By midnight, every one was asleep, except the watch.

At length the dawn arose, and everybody was up and busy at work with the cutting-up. Tackle was rigged upon the end of the yardarms, and spades distributed among the workers. A sailor got down upon the floating whale and passed around his fins a chain of differently sized links, which was afterwards lashed to a pulley. Whilst this was going on the whalers were all armed with spades fixed to long handles, and set to work at the cutting-up. A huge slice of blubber was dug out with a fin, and then the body of the whale turned round in the water like a bobbin which is being unwound. As soon as the piece was raised to the height of the yardarm, it was hooked to another apparatus below, and another slice was cut and hauled. An extraordinary activity pervaded the whole ship, and never ceased until the whole body was stripped of its blubber.

The next operation was to sever the head from the trunk, and a number of men armed with axes succeeded in separating a gigantic bone, and in so dividing this portion of the carcase. The pulleys were at once employed to haul the enormous jaws 156 aboard, for the sake of the whalebone. The rest of the body was given up to the sharks and birds of prey, which came from every quarter of the compass, and deafened us with their cries.

The blubber of the whale was laid out between decks, in layers almost three feet broad by ten to fourteen inches thick, and eighteen to twenty feet long. It was afterwards cut into pieces and thrown into large cauldrons, which were rigged up at the foot of the mizen-mast. All day and night the crew were busily employed melting the blubber, and the sailors fed the fire with scraps soaked in oil. To see these fellows employed in this horrible culinary operation (the stench of which was abominable), one would have thought them a troop of demons making some charm or cooking for a witches' Sabbath. Our ears were, in the meantime, regaled with songs, sung with all the nasal twang of the Yankee, and of the music of which Rossini, Bellini, and even Verdi were entirely innocent.

Next morning early, our sailing captain (who had left all the fishing operations to the undivided superintendence of the other “twin”) set sail for New York. As the *Jackson* was sailing on the larboard tack, we held to the S.S.W., with a free wind and all sails set, stern

sails and topgallant-sails, the foresails well filled, and the ensign hoisted. We spanked on at eleven knots an hour, and the crew was busily employed in stowing away the barrels of 157 oil in the hold. When we passed Fort Hamilton about three o'clock in the afternoon, and were visited by the Custom-house officers, all the work was finished, and, an hour afterwards, the vessel was in its old place in the East River.

Whilst we had been absent after the whale, the *Sun* (a rival of the *Herald*) had been very merry on the subject of our “sell.” A whale in New York waters seemed to our contemporary to be a monster without parallel, an abuse of public credulity for which there could be no excuse. An article against my little “par” had been published, with great laughter at our expense. The public knew not which to believe; but the question was settled next morning, when I published in the *Herald* a full, true, and particular account of the voyage of the *Jackson* to Long Island Point, and the *Sun* (which had in former times published, as *bonâ fide,* Herschel's* Voyage to the Moon,” and other pleasantries of the same kind, by the celebrated. Edgar Poe) had no reply to the detailed account which I gave under the authority of my own name.

* *Quœre.*—“Hans Ffall's Voyage”?— Trans.

The catch was worth 500 *l.* to the ship, and one fine morning I received a present which I still preserve as a memorial of the expedition,—a beautiful breast-pin, representing a golden whale, with diamond eyes,—“a due acknowledgment,” said the accompanying letter, “of the service rendered us on 158 the night of the 22nd of March, 1818, and of the profit which resulted therefrom.”

The fact which I have just narrated is, in more than one respect, exceptional. At the time when I publish these pages, Labrador is all but deserted by the whale; its giants are dead, or have quitted its coasts for others less frequented by man. In the month of July, however, they appear occasionally and then they patrol the coasts and the most secluded bays in “schools.”

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In obedience to what law does the whale migrate? After frequenting certain localities for centuries, he suddenly disappears from them, and never returns. Why is this? How can we explain his flight or departure, the regularity or irregularity of his nomade habits? It has been proved by experience that the whale can live in all latitudes. He is to be met with even in tropical regions, the African or Brazilian coasts, the Gulf of Panama, and even the shores of Arabia Felix; you find him under the equinoctial line, for example, near Galapago Island, and in the midst of polar ice, at 86 degrees of north latitude, and also south of Cape Horn and the Falkland Islands. Formerly, the whale abounded in our own waters, and frequented the Bay of Biscay, and even the Mediterranean, in schools.

It is certain that the whale is a creature of wandering habits. Those which belong to the western hemisphere frequent the bays on the west 159 coast of Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to about 10 degrees of south latitude. They stay there until the month of September, and then bring forth their young. They afterwards migrate westward, towards the islands of Tristan de Cunha, or the coasts of Paraguay or Patagonia.

But the pursuit to which these creatures have been subjected by the whale-fishers has caused many changes in their habits and localities. Centuries have elapsed since whales deserted the Mediterranean, although, beyond a doubt, in former days they appeared there, as we learn from Plutarch, Pliny, and several other ancient writers. The smaller kinds of whales were at this time the objects of an important fishery in the Grecian waters.

Later on, until the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, the fishermen of the Bay of Biscay followed the whale fishery with ardour, and as they retired further and further from the shore, the bold navigators exercised their ingenuity in discovering the places of their retreat. They pursued them across the ocean, and reached even (so it is said) the shores of Canada, discovering the banks of Newfoundland on the way back, where they busied themselves with fishing for cod. It is to these circumstances, doubtless, that the fable is due which was circulated shortly after the death of Christopher Columbus, concerning a

Biscayan pilot, who (according to 160 Fernandez Lopez de Gomara) had the honour of first discovering the West India Islands.

The whale, tracked and hunted upon every sea, has almost entirely abandoned (in our hemisphere especially) his old localities. His movements have lost their former regularity; his instinct (more astute than that of other migratory fishes) has put him on his guard against the dangers which menace him periodically in certain places. The giant of the sea flies before man the persecutor, and seeks a shelter in the icy regions of the north and south, until, pursued even to those regions, he re-appears again in less inclement seas. This is why the localities of the fisheries change so often, and sometimes so rapidly.

The Dutch organised a whale-fishery on a large scale, and built permanent establishments at Spitzbergen. The creeks and harbours of a coast which is now almost unknown were then annually ploughed by from three to four hundred whale-ships. Groenhaven bay, the great canal of Iszond, the coasts of the island of Voorland and Smeeremberg roads, were then the centre of an extraordinary amount of business during the fishing season. The village of Smeerenberg (which derived its name from *smeeren,* to melt) was, although within a few degrees of the Arctic Circle, well supplied with luxuries of all kinds from Amsterdam. The departure of. the whale, however, and the maritime incursions of Jean Bart 161 and Duguay Trouin, compelled the Dutch to abandon a factory, the exact geographical position of which could not now be easily discovered.

Five-and-twenty years ago, the eastern coast of Greenland was thought by the English whale-fishers to be an excellent place for fishing; but now the whalers pass them without even stopping to look out for the prey.

It has been said, and with reason, that the whales quit the icy zones in the winter to seek more temperate latitudes, and it is easy to understand that when they get among the icebergs they fly from regions where they are in danger of being suffocated among the ice,

and of being deprived of the power of breathing the atmospheric air which is so necessary to their existence.

Two words more before I close. The flesh of the whale has a disgusting flavour. Even the whale-fishers themselves are of that opinion; but it is strange how tastes change with the fashions. Who could suppose that, at one time, whale's flesh was considered a royal dish in England? We have no need to go back as far as the Saxons, who were great whale-eaters, to find examples of this strange taste. The whale was served upon royal tables as late as the sixteenth century. In 1242, Henry III. required the Sheriffs of London to supply his table with a hundred dishes of whale's meat. All whales caught off the coast were considered royal waifs. VOL. II. M 162 They were cut into pieces and carried to the royal kitchens. Edward II. rewarded three sailors with twenty shillings for bringing a whale to the port of London. Whales caught on the banks of the Thames belonged to the Lord Mayor, and added by their appearance at table to the magnificence of the civic banquet.

In the thirteenth century, whale's flesh was purchased for the table of the Countess of Leicester. England was then provided with this much-prized comestible by the Norman fishermen, to whom the whale was an important article of commerce. The Normans had a variety of recipes for cooking whale's flesh. Sometimes they roasted it; but more commonly it was boiled, and served with peas. I am inclined to think that a modern cook of reputation would hesitate to serve fillets of whale roasted or with sauce, and I am certainly of opinion that very few epicures could be found to eat them.

X.—THE MONSTERS OF THE ATLANTIC.

I was on a journey to Cuba on board a sailing vessel which had been towed into the gulf of Mexico, near the mouths of the Mississippi. The wind had lulled, and it was a dead calm. The sea 163 was literally like a mirror, vast and immeasurable, and although the sails were unfurled, the ship did not advance a hair's breadth. There it lay, like a stranded whale, floating on the water. The tropical heat, the burning sun, everything tended to render the

motionless condition of the *San Christoval* insupportable. One day passed in this manner; then two, three, and finally a week. If we gradually lost sight of land the fact was due to the currents. In fact, we were enjoying—if such a word can be applicable to our feelings—a dead calm, and it was most irritating both to the crew and the passengers. In vain did the captain exercise his ingenuity to amuse the travellers who were under his care. His excellent dinners, his musical *soirées* , and the dancing parties which he organised were quite unable to dissipate the weariness and impatience which fell upon all who were thus imprisoned in the *San Christoval.*

The only amusement we had was that of fishing. It was pleasant to watch the shoals of enormous dolphins playing along the side of the ship, their bronze skins and iridescent colours sparkling and shining in the sun. We amused ourselves with watching the captain and sailors harpooning these monsters of the Atlantic, and catching them with large hooks. It was curious to watch these creatures dart at the bait. As soon as they felt that they were hooked, they hurried off in a contrary direction, carrying the line with them, and when they had taken it all out M 2 164 and were pulled up short, they leapt into the air and sometimes got loose. When, however, they failed in this, we played them until they were tired and we could pull them alongside and haul them up on deck, where they jumped about from side to side, until suddenly the body stiffened, and the gigantic creature was dead.

The dolphins of the Gulf of Mexico go about in parties of five or six, hunting their prey, as it were, in a pack. Their favourite game is the flying fish or the sea perch, which they will snap up under the very sides of the ship. It is most amusing to watch the dolphins in pursuit of the flying fish. The only means of escape in the power of the latter is the rapidity of its flight. They dart into the air, along the surface of the water, spreading out their fins, which are like large wings, and flying like a covey of partridges when flushed in a clover field. The flight is not a long one, however, and the dolphins, by watching them, manage to catch the laggards as they fall again into the sea. One of the most remarkable circumstances about the dolphins is the mutual affection which they manifest towards each other. When one of them is caught by a hook or harpoon, all the others who are

free surround him, and seem to wish to succour him; and when the captured creature has expended all its strength and is hoisted out of the water, its comrades seem to sigh over and bewail its fate. Yet a moment afterwards 165 the sorrow seems all forgot, and the survivors dart upon the bait as ravenously as before, and pay with their lives the penalty of their folly or their courage.

One morning, it was the fifth after we started, a burning sun was melting the very pitch on the ship's sides, and no one cared to come on deck but the sailors on duty, for fear of sun-stroke. Even these brave tars had covered their hats with large white linen cloths. The cook came to my cabin to tell me that the sea all round the *San Christoval* was covered with dolphins, and this, according to friend Daniel (which was the name of our cook), was a sign of a favourable wind.

I got upon the poop as soon as possible, and in less than two hours Daniel and myself captured ten dolphins by the aid of a slice of shark's flesh, a bait which the dolphin prefers to any other. The dolphin may, however, be classed among the gluttons, for he will swallow anything when he is hungry, and I have seen him caught with a bit of white cloth put upon a hook.

In spite of the crowds of dolphins which sported on the starboard and larboard of the *San Christoval* there was still no breeze, and captain, crew, and passengers, were all getting out of patience. For my part, however, I consoled myself with the fishing. After breakfast, I threw my hook into the sea, and soon had the pleasure of seeing a dolphin take my bait and run out the line. Some of these fish were 166 so large that they seemed to drag the ship, and I frequently required the help of two sailors to get them on board. When lying on the deck, they beat time with their tails as regularly as if with a drumstick. One of the most remarkable appearances about these monsters was the chameleon-like shades of their skin, which changed from gold to lapis lazuli, and from that to emerald, sapphire, and silver. When the belly was opened to take out the entrails and cut the fish up in pieces for the cook, a basketful of flying fish would be found lying side by side, all with their tails

downwards, which leads one to infer that the dolphin follows the flying fish and swallows him tail first.

The length of these dolphins varied from three to five feet, and the weight was from ten to thirty-five pounds. Their bulk is small when compared with their length; the flesh is firm and white, and resembles that of the tunny or sturgeon, though somewhat insipid to my taste.

On the evening of that memorable day two sharks were harpooned by our sailors. One was a female, of seven feet long, in the belly of which were two young sharks, alive, and quite ready to start on their own account. One of them was thrown into the sea, and he set off swimming as if he had been accustomed to that exercise for years. The other shark was a male fish. They both supplied capital bait for the dolphin fishers.

167

Next day, the calm was still unbroken, and as we were getting rather tired of dolphins we threw our lines for some of the sea-perches, which literally swarmed around our stern. We caught them with little pieces of bacon upon hooks whipped on to a strong line. That morning we took 203 of these fishes, and from three o'clock to evening 121. We had a grand feast that evening, for these perch are the best fish for eating that I know of.

Next morning, at dawn, we were in sight of Key West, borne thither by the current, and without the slightest breath of wind having bellied our sails. The man at the watch had signalled a school of porpoises* ahead, gambolling on the liquid plain.

* Some writers have classed the porpoise among the whale family, as a smaller species. Its length seldom exceeds from ten to twelve feet. Its exterior conformation, however, bears a very faint resemblance with that of the queen of the ocean. Its elongated head resembles rather the head of a pig. Its jaws are furnished from end to end with little pointed teeth. In its head is aperture for blowing the water, a faculty which earns for the larger species the nick-name of the *Whistler.* Among the ancients the porpoise was accounted a great delicacy. I am not of their opinion; but there is no accounting for taste.

The Saxons called the porpoise *sea-pig*, and the ecclesiastics of the middle ages gave him the same name ia Latin. Porpoises were purchased for Henry III.'s table in 1426, and they figure in the bill of fare for a sumptuous banquet which was given to Richard II., at Durham House, on the occasion of the solemn installation of Archbishop Neville, when four of these creatures appeared upon the table. In 1491, the Bailiffs of Yarmouth presented Lord Oxford with a fine porpoise, accompanied by an address, in which they said that in their opinion nothing could be more agreeable to his lordship.

At the marriage of Henry V. roast porpoises were served at dinner, and were considered a great delicacy. At the coronation dinner for Henry VIII. porpoises were also served. They were dished up roasted, boiled, as pies, and, finally, as “delicious puddings.” The recipes for the proper sauces for porpoises have been preserved, and the poets of the fifteenth century have sung of them. The flesh of the porpoise was in favour until the sixteenth century. It was served at Wolsey's table; and when Somerset and other lords of the Star Chamber dined together upon grand occasions, they enjoyed a porpoise which had cost about eight shillings. Queen Elizabeth herself, (who was supposed to have a very finely educated taste,) pronounced in favour of the porpoise. It was sold in market overt at Newcastle up to 1575, after which time it seems to have passed out of consideration.

168

I had never seen *these* monsters of the Atlantic so close before, so I scrutinised their movements with some curiosity. I should have thought that they rolled themselves over like a wheel; but this illusion is produced by the movement of two fins, each about two feet long, which appear above the surface and disappear with extraordinary rapidity. Sailors and those who are acquainted with their habits testify that the porpoise is very pacific, and lives principally upon shrimps. The whale-fishers, however, think them worth harpooning when they come to sport under the stern of the vessel. The great agility of the creature renders his capture extremely difficult, and it requires no common amount of skill to transfix him with the first stroke of the harpoon.

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Porpoises have not been made the subject of wonderful stories like the sharks; but there are maritime superstitions in which they take their part. The sailors maintain that they always swim in the direction from which the wind is coming, and that 169 they go to meet it. They are also supposed to foretell bad weather, and there is a belief that they are blind for one month in every year.

Their appearance was a good augury to our voyage, and for this reason they ought to have been spared; but, as with all kinds of sportsmen, all is fish to the fisherman, and we set to work to do our best to catch some of these monster fishes. Throughout the day, they kept their distance from the ship; but after supper the moon rose brightly, and enabled, us to perceive three huge porpoises within a dozen yards of the sides at the most. The cook of the *San Christoval* , who was a very skilful harpooner, quickly seized a weapon, and, during a favourable moment, struck one of the porpoises right between the shoulders, just at the junction of the head with the body, and with such effect that it could not free itself. After trying all it could, we managed to haul it on the deck, where it gave vent to a loud groan, flapped about its tail and fins, and soon breathed its last. We left it there until the next morning, and immediately after breakfast Master Daniel invited us to come and see the creature cut up. We found the intestines still warm, and resembling in their arrangement those of a pig. In the stomach were several cuttle fish, half digested. The lower jaw projected beyond the upper one by about seven inches, and both jaws were furnished with single rows of conical teeth, 170 each half an inch long, and so arranged that they fitted into each other. The creature weighed four hundred pounds. This was a favourable occasion for examining at leisure one of the most curious specimens of the monsters of the Atlantic, and as I saw one for the first time, I did not fail to profit by it.

The next time I was present at the catching of a porpoise happened at Sandy Hook, near New York, where I had gone with some sporting friends. We had gone there to fish for clams, and to enjoy a bathe. We were seated round a capital breakfast, when one of the blacks who were waiting upon us, came to announce a school of porpoises within gun-shot

of the shore; and there they were, sure enough. In a twinkling, we had decided upon our plan of action. We were twenty-three in all, and there were ten boats at our disposal. We divided ourselves into two parties, one going to the right, and the other to the left, so as not to alarm the porpoises, and enable us to get behind them in a semi-circle. Two men got into each boat, and one pulled, while the other stood ready with a gaff. Presently the two lines began to draw together, so as to prevent the porpoises from getting out into the open sea. As we advanced, the porpoises were driven closer to land, and we kept beating the water with our gaffs, so as to make as much noise as possible. In a short time the bottom became visible, and the porpoises began leaping about like goats, and trying their utmost to 171 escape, but we knocked them about without pity, and managed so well that, out of fourteen porpoises, nine “bit the dust”—of the waves; the others managed to escape by diving, and we saw them no more.

One of the most curious incidents in this adventure was the feat of one of our friends, a certain Dick Moon, who had not swallowed a mouthful when the black servant announced the arrival of the porpoises. He jumped into the water, and seeing one of the huge creatures within reach, caught hold of it by the fins, and steered it towards land, where eight victims were already lying side by side. A paragraph went the round of the papers, recounting this adventure, with all our names given at full length,—a practice which is much in vogue in the States, but which is scarcely in accordance with European taste.

I must return, however, to the *San Christoval* , now in full sail before a fair wind, which brought us into the port of Savannah twenty-four hours afterwards. As we went along we took a saw-fish and a narwhal,—two other species of the monsters of the Atlantic, which find their way into our waters. The captain of the *San Christoval* (a regular old sea-wolf, who had plenty of experience in the Labrador fisheries and on the Californian coast, after whalebone and oil), gave me the following account of these two creatures.

The saw-fish* sometimes attains a length of about twenty feet over all, and is the most dangerous enemy the whale has. It pursues the monstrous cetacea wherever it can find him, and attacks him furiously with his long serrated sword,—a weapon set firmly in front of his bead. The saw-fish sometimes approaches ships, as in our case, and in the following, which the captain narrated.

* *Pristis antiquorum.*

During one of his whale-fishing expeditions, the whale boat had come upon a saw-fish lying motionless, and probably asleep, on the surface of the water, and the harpooner transfixed it firmly in the middle of the back. Fortunately the boat made off at once, for the creature fought with a violence and fury that might have endangered the boat and its crew. After a few struggles, it dragged the boat along with extraordinary swiftness, and the captain of the boat was at a loss to know what to do under the circumstances, for it was the first, and very probably the last time, that he had ever encountered a saw-fish. He determined, however, to haul upon the line, and so get closer to the formidable brute; but as soon as he got within a few yards of the creature, it began fighting and diving down. Eventually, however, they got it to the surface quite dead; and towed it to the ship. “That saw-fish,” said the captain of the *San Christoval* , “was only eight feet long. Its skin was very fine, and of a 173 grayish colour, and the flesh resembled that of the bonito or the tunny. It had very large and handsome eyes. Generally speaking,” he added, “the saw-fish can only be taken after it has had a desperate struggle with a whale, a spectacle which cannot often be witnessed, but which, when it can be seen, is sufficiently astonishing to amaze the most experienced. The saw-fish travel in schools, like the whales themselves, and when two parties meet, the struggle sometimes has all the character of a submarine battle. When they meet, the saw-fish announce their presence by leaping up into the air, and the whales serry their ranks and prepare for action. The saw-fish then attack in line, and the action becomes general. The saw-fish always endeavours to take its antagonist in flank, either because its cruel instinct has revealed to it the weak place in the whale's

armour (a spot close to the lateral fins, where a wound is mortal), or because the side offers a fairer and larger surface to its blows. The saw-fish, however, first recedes, the better to make its attack, and if the movement escapes the watchful eye of the whale, the latter is certainly lost; but if the whale sees the saw-fish at the moment when it is about to attack him, he leaps out of the water the whole length of his body, with an instantaneous bound, and comes down again with a shock that may be heard leagues away, lashing the sea into foam."

174

The huge whale has only his tail as a weapon of defence, and he endeavours to strike his dangerous enemy with that. If he succeeds, a single blow is sufficient, but if the saw-fish can avoid the fatal tail, the combat becomes terrific. The aggressor leaps out of the water in its turn, and falls upon the whale, endeavouring, not to transfix it, but to saw it with the teeth with which its weapon is provided. The sea becomes tinged with blood, and the whale is goaded into an ungovernable fury. The saw-fish, however, manage to surround him, and attack him on every side. He is very soon disposed of then, and the saw-fish make off to other conquests.

Sometimes it happens that the saw-fish is unable to escape the whale, as it falls back into the sea, and in that case it will offer its sharp saw to the side of the gigantic animal which is about to crush it, and dies, like Maccabeus, under the weight of the elephant of the seas. The whale then bounds again into the air, sometimes bearing his murderer with him, and dies in the act of killing the monster to which he falls a victim. "If you can picture to yourself," said the worthy captain of the *San Christoval* , "the sea boiling, as it were with foam, and reddened with the blood of victor and vanquished, and the two hostile squadrons attacking each other with the utmost fury; if you can imagine the indescribable tumult, the terrible shocks, the savage roaring, 175 the wild bounds, and the rapid assaults which disturb the liquid plain,—that tempest of a battle, and can realise the appearance

of the wild turmoil and of the bloody corpses, you will be able to form some notion of the horrible reality."

Such tales of warfare among these monsters of the sea might seem fabulous if our museums of natural history did not contain specimens of the weapon of the saw-fish which have been authenticated as having been extracted from the bellies of whales; whilst those who have witnessed these combats have waited near the scene of bloodshed until they could gather up the relics of the struggle without the slightest danger, and then victors and vanquished have been boiled together in one pot, and have mingled their oils in one common receptacle.

I will not weary my readers by enumerating the long series of names which naturalists have bestowed upon the saw-fish, and of the distinctions which have been established between the different species of this clan of *squalidœ* among which must be ranked the narwhal, one of the most dangerous of the enemies of the whale.

Inoffensive as he is, the mighty cetacean is exposed to the attacks of a vast variety of persecutors of every size—the shell-worm eats into his sides; the fighting dolphin (*orca gladiator*) attacks him; the saw-fish transpierces him; man harpoons him, 176 and the shark then devours his carcase, and disputes the possession of his remains with the birds of prey that act as the scavengers of the seas.

It is said that the narwhals, or unicorn-whales (*monodon monoceros*), form themselves into serried battalions to attack the whale and finish him (so to speak) at the point of the bayonet. This, however, must be seen to be believed.

The narwhal which we took had, like the sawfish, the exterior of his head armed. The weapon proceeds from the jaw, is spiral, and seven feet long or more, and is of a substance chiefly resembling ivory. In fact, it is not a horn, as the name would seem to imply, but a tooth. But there are other fishes closely resembling it, and which are often confounded with it, which are properly called *unicorns* , for their weapons are implanted

in the midst of the forehead. As the narwhal will never take a hook, and can very seldom be harpooned, it is by no means easy to capture it. It avoids large vessels as soon as it understands that they are not big fish; but it sometimes happens that it mistakes the side of a ship for a whale, and either yields itself an easy prey or leaves its spear behind as the penalty of its rashness. The narwhal is usually from thirty to forty feet long, and dashes itself against the vessel with prodigious force, piercing the sides and causing serious leaks, if the horn does not remain to stop up the breach which it has made. When the narwhal strikes the 177 ship directly across or from the bows, the weapon breaks short off and the creature turns and flees; but when it delivers its blow from behind, it is held on to the sides of the vessel and is towed by it until it falls into a state of decomposition. If, however, the blow has been delivered near the surface of the water, the horn may be sawn off, and the necessity for dragging an encumbrance which would seriously interfere with the ship's course be avoided. If the creature cannot be disengaged from the vessel on the spot, it is usually done at the first port she happens to touch at.

In our case, the narwhal that we caught thrust his horn into the side of the ship and was unable to withdraw it. They killed him with boat-hooks, and taking advantage of a brief calm managed to extricate the spear and fish intact. When we arrived at New York, the skin of this monster was properly prepared and exhibited as a curiosity by Barnum at his well-known Museum. It was twenty-six feet long from the tail to the tip of the horn. VOL. II.

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178

XI.—SALMON LAKE.

I am aware that I am now taking an oft-trod road. Thanks to steam, the Hudson is now a high road which no man who has ever travelled in the Northern United States can have avoided. Who can tell how many pages have been written about or sketches made of its banks? And yet, in these days of locomotion, where will you find a corner which has not

been exhausted by our modern scribes with their books of travel and cheap lithographs, even down to the painters of panoramas, whose merits ought to be measured by the square yard? And yet, in spite of all that my readers may have read or seen, the painter and the poet have yet to be found, and the pen and pencil yet. to be discovered, that can do justice to the magnificent beauties displayed by the hand of the Almighty on the banks of this noble river. When you are embarked upon the Hudson some fine morning in spring, New York Bay is a splendid introduction to the sublime natural poem whose pages are shortly to be displayed before the eyes of the delighted traveller. To the right, is the picturesque and confused mass which a great city always offers to the eye at a distance, and across the forest of innumerable masts which borders the quays to the left, the pleasant quarter of 179 Hoboken stands in relief against the New Jersey Hills; behind, and in the half-distance are the Battery, Long Island, the Narrows, and a vast plain of water, covered with sails just bellying to the breeze, and all this, when bathed in the calm blue atmosphere of morning, makes up a scene of incomparable beauty. The right bank of the river soon comes forward, and we enter the course of the Hudson, properly so called. On one side is the wall of perpendicular rocks known as the Palisades, on the other the imperial city of former days, succeeded by a continuous line of cottages and country-houses. Never was contrast more complete; on the one side Nature in her wild simplicity, and on the other the small and comparatively contemptible creations of our civilisation. The steamer, however, carries you at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and you arrive at the extremity of the Palisades. The river widens, and cultivated agricultural land takes the place of the gardens. Villages are grouped upon the banks, and take the place of the country-houses. A few more revolutions of the paddle, and the first undulations which announce the Highlands are visible on the horizon.

From that moment, and for about fifty miles farther on, there is a panorama upon which nature seems to have lavished all that she has in the way of magnificence and variety. The river passes through a chain of mountains whose tops vary in height N 2 180 from little hills to summits of fifteen hundred feet high. These hills border the scene like frames of

verdure around landscapes, and occasionally allow a peep at some charming little scene where there is a miniature valley, with pleasant little houses sprinkled here and there with the first buddings of a modern hamlet. Sometimes the perpendicular rocks embank the very brink of the river, and sometimes the chain seems to melt away into the horizon, forming a vast amphitheatre, the furthest boundary of which approaches again, as if to repose by an almost imperceptible inclination in the bed of the river. Here and there soars a lofty peaks, clothed with trees, whose top is lost in the clouds. In the middle of the gorge which nature has hollowed out through these undulations, flows the Hudson, describing a thousand windings and presenting pictures infinite in number and variety. Sometimes it opens a straight vista of five or six miles in length, and then it deviates by a graceful curve, whilst further on there is an unexpected angle or elbow. This last variety (which is by no means common in the course of great rivers) occurs here with extraordinary frequency, and produces the most picturesque effects. In certain spots,—at Caldwell, for example,—a promontory seems literally to bar the passage across, and it is only at the moment when this is rounded that the river reveals its course and opens a new horizon.

After quitting the highlands, a blue line denotes 181 another chain of mountains towards the west, a chain more imposing than that which has just been quitted. These are the Catskill Mountains, whose summits attain a height of four thousand feet; but unfortunately for the curious they remain always in the back-ground, and only approach the river to retreat immediately into the distance. A volume would be required to give the reader even the faintest idea of the picture which I have audaciously attempted to paint. How can I convey a tithe of those thousand details which excite the admiration every moment? How paint the streamlet which flows capriciously in a microscopic cascade down the face of the rock, and falls like a silver thread into the thick mossy carpet which lines the bank? How shall I describe the innumerable bays which are formed by the banks of the river where it receives its affluents, and the eyots which lie in the middle of its course? How enumerate, without making my description as monotonous as an itinerary, the towns, villages, and

houses which arise out of the banks, as it were, at every turn of the paddle, sometimes upon the summit of a hill, but most frequently on the side of some gentle slope.

When the Catskill Mountains disappear on the horizon, a new phase appears in the physiognomy of Nature. The hills grow less in height and the woods disappear, giving place to fields in full cultivation. The farm and the manufactory have taken the place 182 of the country-house and the fashionable hotel. In fact, we are entering at full speed an agricultural country, the peaceful and laughing features of which accompany the traveller up to Albany. He quitted New York when the sun had scarcely topped the horizon, and has arrived at his destination when the day is sinking into the west.

It was after a journey of this kind that I was seated one evening in the piazza of the hotel at Albany, and was thinking of returning to New York (for I had transacted all my business), when two blacks came up, carrying in a large hamper with two handles an enormous salmon, which seemed to weigh from sixty to seventy pounds.

“What a monster!” I cried. “I never saw such a large one.”

“Wall, but Frenchmen don't see everything in creation,” cried some one by way of answer, and on turning round indignantly at this somewhat impertinent observation, I saw that it proceeded from an individual who was sitting, or, to be more accurate, lying down in a rocking-chair, whittling a piece of wood with a large bowie-knife. Directly I turned my eyes on this individual, I recognised an old sporting-friend, Horace Mead, of Philadelphia, whose name has been already mentioned in my volume on “Sport in North America.”

“Can I believe my eyes, old friend? Is it really you?”

183

“Myself, and no one else, I guess. I didn't know you at first 'till I heard your voice,” replied Mead, seizing me by the hands in true American style and nearly wrenching the wrists out of their sockets. “And what are you doing in Albany?”

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“I came to report the opening of the Legislature. I've done my work and can now enjoy a week's holiday.”

“So much the better! In that case you can come on with me this evening to my shooting-box in the Highlands.”

“I certainly can't refuse, if you'll promise me plenty of sport.”

“Fishing's the great sport now, and you shall have plenty of that. So finish what you have to do here, and meet me at the bar of the hotel about five o'clock.”

At the stipulated time, I found Mead at his post, imbibing a sherry-cobler with great gusto, whilst a similar concoction was awaiting me. “Suck up that,” cried he, “and off we go.”b In a couple of minutes, we had mounted the omnibus for the steamer, and in a short time were descending the Hudson towards Stony Point. At two in the morning, the warning was given by the ringing of a bell, and in a loud, intelligible voice that could be heard all through the steamer: “Passengers for Stony Point on deck!”

It was a pitch-dark night, but thanks to the light 184 on board and the torches of the ferrymen at Stony Point, we landed without any mishap.

“We must put up at the Eagle Tavern until morning,” said Mead. “The roads between here and my crib are not good enough to venture on at night. Come on, old friend; follow me.”

He led the way forthwith to a very comfortable hotel, where there was accommodation for man and beast, and the landlord received us very cordially, for Mead was one of his best customers. I found the sheet of my bed very white and well aired, and the bed itself soft and comfortable, and soon fell so sound asleep that, at five in the morning, when my friend came to my bedside, he had to give me a good shaking to rouse me from the state of beatitude in which I was plunged.

“Up with you, lazybones,” cried he; “I give you ten minutes to dress in.”

When I am travelling I never allow any one to tell me twice of laziness, so I jumped up, washed and dressed hastily, and in five minutes was at the door of the tavern taking my place by Mead's side in his waggon, to which was harnessed a capital trotter, with a foot as sure as a mule of the Alps or Pyrenees.

Mead beguiled the drive with many a story of his adventures, and the time seemed short enough when, on turning, the corner of a gorge, he exclaimed. 185 “Here we are, my boy; there's the crib behind the little hill.”

As he said this, we turned the corner, crossed a wooden bridge which spanned the ravine, and found ourselves opposite a gate or barrier which separated the road from a small plantation of choice trees and shrubs. The barrier was open, for the master of Woodcock House was expected, and we drove along a well-kept carriage drive, bordered by a slope that was literally covered with junipers, chestnuts, and clumps of rhododendrons, kalmias, and azaleas, growing out of the fissures of the rocks in the most luxuriant fashion. Presently we heard the sound of a waterfall, and crossed another bridge made of the rough trunks of trees thrown across a very clear and rapid stream. On the other side of the stream was a green meadow, at further end of which was an elegant cottage, built of wood, with a slate roof. The walls of this abode were clothed with creepers of various kinds, lianas, ivy, clematis, cobeas, and roses full of sweet-smelling bloom, covering all but the windows.

“What say you to this, my friend?” quoth Mead. “This is my country box; the only one I have. Do you like it?”

“Impossible to do otherwise.”

“That's well. Hallo, there! Mary!”

In answer to the summons a pleasant-looking old woman appeared at the door of the cottage, followed 186 by a black, who took the horse's head, and we jumped out of the waggon.

“This is an old friend, Mary,” said Mead, “and I recommend him to your care; and these, my boy, are my excellent housekeeper Mary, and my faithful Tingo, who's as cute as he's black.”

Thus saying, Mead led the way into the parlour of the cottage, a little snuggery of some sixteen square yards, with a table in the middle, and a large fire-place in the Tudor style. Against the wall, opposite the fire-place, was an oak sideboard, with bright pewter dishes, glasses, plates, and two flower vases filled with magnolias, verbenas, and water-lilies. Three engravings, representing hunting subjects, and simply framed, hung against the walls, and, above the mantel-piece, two stag's horns turned upside down,* supported four guns in excellent condition. In one of the corners of the room were ranged fishing apparatus of all kinds, and a casting-net quite dry and. in a perfect state of repair.

* The antlers of the American deer curve downwards; so that in order to use them for supporting anything, they must be reversed.

Mary served us an excellent meal, consisting of delicious salmon, trout, roasted woodcocks, &c., followed by a glorious plum-pudding, and washed down with a bottle of claret, that would not have disgraced a first-rate Paris restaurant.

187

In the evening, Mead told me that next day would be spent at his salmon lake.

“You'll see such fishing,” said he, “as you'll remember to your dying day. I must tell you that I'm a kind of fish-merchant, and deal with New York, Albany, and even Boston. My fishery is a very good one, and clears me a good thousand pounds sterling per annum.

That's why I bought Woodcock House. It was shockingly out of repair when I first came to live in it; but I've a good nose, and pretty soon reckoned up the possibilities."

Mead then explained to me the nature of his business in detail. He bred and collected salmon and salmon trout, just as others breed horses and rabbits. He had contracts with some of the principal hotels in New York, and some of the larger fishmongers in different parts of the country. His lakes, ponds, and rivers were managed according to a regular plan. Among other advantages; he had but few neighbours, and his property was in the midst of the Catskill Mountains.

Next day he had to supply a certain number of salmon for New York, and to make up the order great activity would be necessary. For the past few days his men had been busily engaged in driving the fish into a certain corner of the lake. The foreman fisherman came that evening to make his report, which was to the effect that the fish were literally swarming in Mount-top Lake; and next 188 morning Mead and myself were there by sunrise. It was a lovely sight. Before us lay the beautiful lake, the extent of which was about a league square. The lake was fed by innumerable streams flowing from the summits of the Catskills, and the overflow was passed through a canal along the valleys until it fell into the Hudson. It was by this watery way that the salmon regained the upper waters from the sea, as far as Cedar Lake, where they found plenty of food, and bred in the most astonishing manner. There were salmon in these waters that weighed up to sixty pounds avoirdupois.

"Now, boys," cried Mead, as soon as we arrived at the fishery, where his men were all waiting for him, "we must have a good haul this morning. I've got to send sixty fish to New York and Philadelphia this evening. Is all ready?"

"Yes, sir," replied the foreman; "and we're quite ready to begin as soon as you give the word."

“In with you, then,” cried Mead.

There was a large boat, with an immense seine net leaded and corked. One end was fastened to the shore, and the boat pushed off whilst the foreman payed out the net, and the boat was rowed as quietly as possible in a semicircle until we gained the shore again. As soon as this manoeuvre was complete, the boat went outside the semicircle, and eight men began hauling in the net, whilst those in the boat beat the water with oars and boathooks to keep the 189 fish inside the seine. In a very short time the men hauling on the shore felt sufficient resistance to assume then that the draught would be a good one, and in a short time, as the net was drawn upon the shallows, we could perceive those movements which betoken the presence of the fish. In a few minutes, the net was drawn up, and we extracted from its meshes fourteen salmon of various sizes (the weight varying from five-and-twenty to forty pounds), forty-five salmon-trout, with perch, carp, and eels. All that were adjudged to be unsaleable were thrown back into the water, and the remainder were packed up with fresh weed in baskets and carried to the fishery, where they were stored in a cool cellar which had been excavated in the rock. The net was then cast again, and the operation repeated four times in the course of the day, and when night came, my friend, instead of sixty salmon, had sixty-seven to send to his correspondents. A three-horsed waggon conveyed these the same night to Stony Point, where they would meet the steamer to take them to New York and elsewhere. That evening, as we supped gaily in the pretty little parlour of Mead's shooting-box, he promised me some good sport on the morrow after woodcock, and sure enough we bagged nine-and-twenty, with the aid of two fine pointers. That evening we had a torch-light fishing for salmon.

“Take good care,” cried Mead to the harpooner, 190 as we get into the, boat, “and let's have no mistakes?” Thus exhorted, the man never missed his aim once. He stood at the brow of the boat, armed with a three-pronged harpoon, to the handle of which a strong line was fastened by a ring welded to the haft. As we gained the middle of the lake, the foreman lit a torch, and the light was suddenly cast upon the water, so that we could see

clearly for about a dozen yards ahead of the boat. A moment afterwards, Mead pointed to a black spot which had risen to the surface a short distance from us.

“A salmon!” he whispered in my ear.

The harpooner had also seen the fish, and brandishing his weapon with a sure arm, he struck the fish so deeply that it was impossible for it to get loose. At the same instant the line began to uncoil with extraordinary rapidity; but before it was all payed out it stopped: the fish was dead. The harpooner and his two mates then hauled in the line, coiling it as they pulled it in, and presently the fish was brought to the surface of the water, and so into the boat. It was a splendid salmon, weighing about forty pounds, and in very fine order. Three times did the harpooner throw his weapon, and landed a fish every time. After this we had seen enough, and went home.

It were needless to recount all the pleasure I experienced whilst enjoying the hospitalities of my old friend of the prairies; but my readers will 191 easily understand that I quitted Woodcock House with regret, and that I am always delighted at receiving a letter from my friend, in memory of past times.

XII.—THE TURTLES OF SAND-KEY ISLAND.

I have often been puzzled to understand how it is that the French *cuisine* has so entirely neglected the turtle,* and has only succeeded in using it for

* Naturalists class the turtle among the reptiles, a numerous order of vertebrated animals. *Linnœus* created the genus *Testudo*, and Brogniart the family *Chelonia*, which he divided into eighty different species and five sub-classes, viz.: the *Testudinidœ*, or tortoises; the. *Emygdidœ* and *Cheldydidœ*, or fresh-water turtles; the *Trionycidœ*, a the *Chelonidœ.* The general characteristics of these different classes consist of the bony or horny shield, which takes the place of the skin-covering of other animals, over the greater part of their bodies. Turtles are furnished with skin only at the junction of the four limbs, and of the

head, which is covered with plates as with the lizards and serpents. This shield, which joins the spinal process on its inner side, is divided into two parts, the upper portion being called the carapace, and the lower the plastron. The head of the turtle is of a pyramidal or triangular form. It has small eyes, covered with three eyelids. Its neck is capable of great elongation, and the toes of its fins are terminated by nails. It has a vigorous stomach, and easily digests the mollusks upon which it feeds. Its jaws are of great force. Its tardiness of locomotion is proverbial, and its stupidity is not less remarkable; yet it is easily trained. The tortoises of Europe belong to the hybernating class of animals, and sleep during the cold season. Feeding, reproduction, concealment, and sleep—such is the existence of the tribe. Nevertheless, it is a creature that maintains a firm hold of life. I have seen one at Key West, the head of which had been cut off, but which nevertheless gave indications of suffering.

192 dishes the price of which forbid them to become popular. Nevertheless, ancient authors, such as Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, and Strabo, make mention of turtle as a food very commonly enjoyed by the inferior classes of society in their time; and even in our own days, throughout the whole of the West Indies, and along the coasts of North and South America, in the East Indies, Batavia, China, Japan, and even in England, the meat of the turtle justly enjoys the reputation of being a savoury and delicate meal, and is indeed one of the principal national dishes of the United Kingdom.

Great Britain is the only country in Europe where the turtle is appreciated as it should be. The importations to Liverpool, Southampton, and London amount commonly to about one hundred and thirty tons. To keep the turtle alive through long voyages, they are placed in barrels set upright; but many captains are less careful of their freight. They content themselves with turning them on their backs, and watering them twice a day with seawater. On their arrival, they are stored in reservoirs, and fed up for use. It was Lord Anson who brought home the first turtle that was eaten in London, in the year 1752. The price of turtle varies from one shilling to three shillings per pound, 193 according to the supply in the market. It is strange that France, which too often follows the example of

England in very questionable directions, has not had the good sense to adopt this good English fashion, so that the Parisian epicure might order at Philippe's or the Café Anglais a bowl of turtle at something like a reasonable price. Yet how rarely does a turtle make its appearance in our markets, and when it does so, how difficult to find a purchaser! I must confess that my compatriots in this respect ignore “one of the finest dishes known,” as an American called a *boucan* , the first time I had the pleasure of tasting one.

This is an exquisite composition, and the flavour perfection. Its appearance is peculiar. I must admit, but it is not difficult to grow accustomed to it. Let us suppose the plastron, or undermost shell of the turtle, with a portion of flesh and fat still adhering. This flesh is green in colour, and of delicious flavour. It has been saturated with lemon-juice, and flavoured with pimento, salt, pepper, cloves, and eggs beaten up. It has then been placed in the oven, under the superintendence of a black armed with a spit, whose duty it is to break up from time to time the crust which is formed by the eggs, and to allow the same to permeate the whole stew. When it is all cooked to a moment, it is served quite hot, and meets with invariable and universal approbation. VOL. II. O

194

In the West Indies, the turtle is served in a great variety of ways. They make it into soup, they roast it, stew it, make it into ragout, fricassee, or patties. Its fat, intestines, fins, and even its bones, are good to eat. The Americans, by way of applying to it the highest eulogy possible, call it the *sea-pig.* Not a very pretty compliment, surely!

The flesh of the turtle is not only agreeable to the palate, but it is also very easy of digestion. A large quantity of it may be devoured without the slightest inconvenience. In Martinique, turtles are sold at about a shilling per pound, and are consequently eagerly sought after. About Lent, the vessels which engage in this fishery quit the port of St. Pierre to fish for turtles, and frequently return with large cargoes.

The island of Hetera, one of the Bahamas, and the furthest from the coast, is most celebrated for its turtle-fishery. There are also Caïman Island, on the extreme end of Florida; and Marguerite Island, on the Venezuelan coast. As, however, I can only pretend to describe what I have witnessed myself, I shall only mention the Island of Hetera, where, fifteen years ago, I took part in a marvellous adventure of turtle-fishing, which I shall now narrate.

A few words, however, on the general subject of the *Chelonia* , before I come to my story. Full turtles (or as they are also called, green turtles) weigh up to 195 seven or eight hundred pounds; but the largest are by no means the best. Those weighing under forty pounds are greatly preferred. At New Orleans, I heard of a monstrous green turtle which was taken at Port Royal, in 1848, in Campeachy Bay, and which measured four feet in thickness from the back to the belly, and was six feet broad across the belly. The son of a sea-captain, a lad of ten or eleven years, had the shell of this monster given to him, and had it made into a canoe, or coracle, in which he would venture out some distance from shore. The fat of this creature produced eight gallons of oil.

The cleverest fisherman at Key West* (where I went to spend a few days (during the summer of 1848) was a man named Downing. All along the Floridan coast Downing, the mulatto, was known as the great catcher and dealer in turtles. Mr. Elliott, of Savannah, a gentleman to whom I had been introduced by a New York friend, gave me a note to Downing, who received me very kindly when I arrived at Fort Imperial, where he spent all the fishing season in a delightful little house.

* Key West, or Thompson Island, is about fifty miles from the coast of Florida, and derives its name from the Spanish word *Cavo* (a rocky islet), and not, as some apprehend, from the English word *Key.* As a military post, it is of great importance to the States, and a considerable amount of trade is transacted there.

“I take such an introduction, sir,” said Downing, “as a compliment, and will do my best to make your visit agreeable to you. As you can spend two or O 2 196 three weeks here, I'll arrange an expedition to Hetera, and I'll wager that we shall have some sport such as you have rarely seen. The weather's all in our favour, for it's full moon, and I know where to find some wreckers who are friends of mine, and who'll wish for no better fun than to go with us.”

“Wreckers!” cried I. “Is it possible you keep company with such people? In Europe, we always set down ‘wreckers’ as thieves; sometimes even as murderers.”

“But in America, sir, they are a very different race. ‘Wreckers’ are fishermen by trade, but are at all times ready to risk their own lives to save those of other people. By the law, they are authorised in taking possession of such waifs as the sea may cast ashore. The insurance companies pay the owners, and the poor bodies who do so much good must live.”

“Well, well, friend Downing; it will be a new sort of character to study, at any rate. And now, how about the turtles?”

“Would you like to see my museum, sir?”

“Your museum?”

“Yes; my collection of turtles. They are not alive, of course; but they'll give you a good idea of the different species. I've fished for them these forty years, and have collected the best specimens which came in my way.”

197

“By all means let me see them. I am quite curious to visit the museum.”

Downing opened a door, and ushered me forthwith into a very large room, rough-cast with lime from the floor to the ceiling; on the walls were displayed more than two hundred turtle shells of all kinds and dimensions. I certainly had never before seen so many specimens of the same genus brought together.

“These, sir,” said he, “are the green sea-turtles. There are four kinds of them,—the trunk-turtles, the big-heads, the hawk's-bill, and the green. The first are the thickest, as you may see, and their backs are higher and rounder; but their meat is sometimes very unwholesome. It's the same with the big-heads; no one ever eats them unless obliged. These two kinds feed on the scum and other things which are collected among the rocks and reefs. As for the hawk's-bills, they get their name from the shape of their heads. They have long necks, with a kind of beak at the end, and their shells are used for combs and cabinet-making. These also are not very good to eat, and I've known fishermen taken quite bad from eating them, just as if they had been poisoned. But here are two splendid green turtles, for which I refused, when they were alive, twenty pounds a piece. You see I'm fond of my collection, and would sooner have that perfect than earn a few more dollars. However, I beg your pardon, 198 sir, for I must be only boring you with my nonsense.”

“Indeed you are not, my dear Mr. Downing,” said I, examining the pair of turtle-shells against the wall; “I beg you will go on.”

“The green turtle,” added the fisherman, “has a greener shell than any other kind, and that's why he's called as he is. They are the largest of all, and sometimes weigh as much as six hundred and eight hundred pounds. These only weighed three hundred and eighty and three hundred and ninety-nine pounds; but their regular shape and the transparent quality of the shell made me pick them out of twenty which we caught in one day's fishing at Hetera, and so I kept 'em, in spite of Mrs. Downing, who was alive then—God rest her soul! I kept them, and cooked them myself, and they made the best turtle-soup I ever ate in my life. But I hope I don't weary you, sir?”

I assured him that he did not, and he continued. “The green turtle feeds on a kind of weed which grows in the sea, in four, five, or six fathom deep of water. This plant has a pleasant taste, and its leaves are delicate, and a quarter of an inch broad, by six inches in length.* It is to this peculiar food

* Marine turtles usually feed upon fucoids, hydrophytes, molluscs, and the different species of algæ with which the bottom of the sea is carpeted. They may be seen in troops (just like shoals of mackerel or herring) coming to feed on their favourite spots, at regular hours, morning and evening.

199 that the green turtle owes the green colour of its flesh and shell. The fat of this species is, however, yeUowish, and this peculiarity is noticeable also in the turtles from Boccataro, Portobello, and the Bays of Campeachy and Honduras, and on the coasts of Jamaica and Cuba. At Port Royal, they have reservoirs on the shore to keep the green turtles alive, and supply the market, which is very abundantly provided with this nourishing and succulent food, and there it's sold cheaply enough for people of small means.

“Now here (he added) are four turtles which were sent me from the Galapagos, the Guano Islands. Their shell is thicker than any others I have. In fact, they are from two to three inches thick. Here, on the right, sir, you'll find some fresh-water species. Here are some *luths,* or leathery turtles—very extra-ordinary creatures; and here some *hecates* , which always remain in fresh-water ponds, and scarcely ever come to land. Their weight varies from twelve to twenty pounds, and they are round in form. The *terrapins* are smaller than the last, and the plates of the carapace are cut in a curious shape, beautiful in workmanship, and nicely shaded. They live in damp and marshy places. These are from the Island of Pisces, near Cuba. You will notice that they are marked on the back with several notches. It is the custom of the Spanish hunters, when they find them in the woods, to take them to huts, mark them, 200 and let them loose again. When that is done, they never go very far, and when the hunters go back to Cuba, they will take with them

four or five hundred of these turtles, which meet with a ready sale, for they are capital eating. Every man knows his own by the marks.

“The fresh-water turtle of the States—and here's a very fine specimen—has a mouth more like a toad than anything else. Their limbs are so large, that there is not quite enough room for them under the shell, as is the case with the Emydidæ or terrapins. These last have the peculiarity, that when the limbs are all beneath the shell, the covering can be shut up just as if it were a box, so as to conceal the creature completely.”

“I remember seeing that kind of turtle in the New Jersey swamps,” replied I to the mulatto.

“It abounds in all swampy places, and so do the snapping turtles, or *triones* , so called because they are savage, and are apt to bite those who try to catch them. The last live on fish, water reptiles, ducks, &c. You perceive that they have only three claws, instead of four or five, and that their shell is not composed of a hard and horny substance, like the other varieties, but of a soft and thick covering, which hardens in proportion as the *trione* grows older. Look now at this land tortoise, with the palmated feet. It is said that this kind will live a hundred years.”

201

I admired everything, at the same time lending an attentive ear to Downing's explanations. After which, as I was about to take my leave for the purpose of returning to Fort Imperial, my entertainer said: “Perhaps, sir, it may be a little bold in me to invite a white man to my table, but if you will condescend to take supper here, I think I can offer a better meal than you are likely to find at your hotel.”

“My good friend,” I replied, “it's all the same to me what colour a man may be of, and I accept your hospitality gladly.”

“Thank you, sir,” cried Downing, evidently greatly pleased with the compliment; “and now you shall have a supper all of turtle.”

“All of turtle!”

“Yes, sir—soup, entrée and joint, all complete. A green turtle will supply our supper, and you may rely upon my cooking. I've a reputation that way, you must know, and am rather proud of it.”

On this, Downing installed me into a comfortable rocking-chair under a bower of magnolias, and having placed some capital cigars within reach, betook himself to his kitchen with a young negress servant, and left me to enjoy the pleasures of a delightful reverie. It was not long, however, before a delicious odour interrupted the course of my meditations. The kitchen window was open, and that fact accounted for the undefinable perfume which not 202 only delighted the olfactories, but excited the hopes of both palate and stomach.

At length he returned, dressed in a suit of white linen, and the supper was served up forthwith; Mia, the negress, having dexterously laid the cloth, and spread it with the proper complement of knives, forks, plates, &c. Downing re-appeared with a mighty tureen of turtle soup, of the excellence of which he evidently did not entertain the slightest doubt. This he proceeded to serve out with a wooden ladle, duly apportioning the green fat, forcemeat balls (of the size of a pigeon's egg), and the yolks of eggs poached. The flavour and aroma of the soup were delicious, and flattered alike the palate and the nose. I had eaten turtle soup many a time before at the *tables d'hôte* of many a hotel, but never anything so exquisite as this. Suffice it to say that between us we finished the tureen.

After the soup, came a turtle steak, flavoured with lemon juice and pimento; a succulent and savoury dish, which met with my entire appreciation. The next dish served by Mia was composed of the eggs of the green turtle, and was of a flavour and perfume which astonished me. During the discussion of these dishes, some excellent red still Catawba was served, a wine which is not unlike our Beaune or Joigny.* For dessert we had pine-apples, bananas,

* The Catawba is a very sweet grape, and is capable of producing an admirable wine. It is the best wine in the States, and the wine made of it is so good, and it propagates so rapidly, that it is not too much to anticipate that, at no very remote period, America will be independent of Europe for a large proportion of its wine supply.

203 and other delicious fruits. A glass of old rum and an excellent Cabana cigar completed this repast, the recollection of which still dwells upon my memory, proving the truth of d'Aigrefeuille's maxim, that the stomach is the most grateful of organs.

As we smoked our tobacco and sipped the old rum, I asked Downing once more about the turtle-fishing.

“Well, sir, for that matter you may start in half-an-hour if you like, or you may wait till to-morrow. In my opinion, the latter course would be the more prudent one.”

“I am quite at your service, my good friend,” I replied. “I have a week to spare, and I devote it entirely to the pleasure which you promised me.”

“Then this is what I propose. To-morrow morning, I will take you to a pond about two leagues hence, which is full of fresh-water turtles, of a quality highly reputed throughout Louisiana. We will stay there for one day, and the next go on to Hetera. Never fear; we shall find very comfortable lodgings there, and you'll be with some of the boldest sailors in the States.”

I left Downing at his own door and returned to my hotel, where I very speedily sought my bed, having it in view that we were to start with the 204 morrow's dawn. At the appointed hour, Downing presented himself at the door of the Fort Imperial Hotel, and we were soon on the road behind a pair of fast-trotting horses. In a very short time, we reached the banks of a stream which flowed through a deep ravine and was shaded over by lofty trees. Following this stream, we reached a lake with grassy margins, and of a form so completely circular that one would have supposed it to have been dug out by the hand of

man to adorn the centre of a park or garden. It is called Lake Worth. Downing had brought lines in his pocket, and only wanted rods to rig up the tackle. There was no great difficulty about this, however; and our arrangements being soon completed, we posted ourselves on the higher parts of the bank, and threw our bait into the lake. A few minutes afterwards, I noticed slight movements of the water here and there, and presently what looked like the heads of snakes popping up all round.

“There are the turtles,” whispered Downing. “Look out; they'll bite directly.”

Presently one of them came near the bank where we were standing, and I could distinctly see his long heart raised out of the water and looking about as if he smelt danger. I turned my head to ask Downing what to do, when I suddenly felt a grab at my hook, just as if a fish had struck it. My surprise, however, was great when I pulled up a turtle,—doubtless the 205 same which had come up a minute before to breathe at the surface. It was not a very large one, and I had no great difficulty in landing him; whereupon Downing, in order to prevent his escape, turned him over on his back, and stuck four little wedges of wood into the apertures where the fins joined the body, thus preventing all chance of locomotion.

We soon had an abundant catch, and I had the pleasure of counting upon the grass around us fourteen turtles, some of them of very respectable weight.

As I was quietly watching the four lines before me, Downing called to me in a low voice and pointed out at a distance of about a hundred yards, and near the corner of a small stream which flowed into the lake, an enormous raccoon, with his brown back, sharp muzzle, and tail striped with black and white. The raccoon had not yet seen us, and, in ignorance of his danger, he was creeping about stealthily, and sometimes getting on the trunk of a fallen tree as if to get a better look-out over the water. “The brute has come to fish,” whispered Downing.

“Nonsense.”

“'Tis true. The 'coons are very fond of turtle.”

“No doubt; but how will he catch one?”

“You'll see presently; only have a little patience.”

I took Downing's advice, who told me not to leave the shelter of the foliage behind which we had concealed ourselves; so there I was, with my eyes wide 206 open, to see what the raccoon would do. Would he jump into the water and catch hold of the turtle? or would he wait until one of them came on shore?

The raccoon did neither. About two yards from the place where he had concealed himself was the trunk of a tree which was held on to the bank by its roots, and to the surface of the water by its branches, some of which, no doubt, rested upon the bottom. The raccoon advanced with slow and stealthy steps towards this trunk, under the shadow of which were several turtles popping up their heads above water. He never lost sight of them, and worming his head through the roots, he placed it between his forepaws, turned his tail towards the water, and pushed it on, little by little, until it almost touched the surface of the lake, when he began to wag it about. The body of the cunning creature was all the time so rolled up into a ball that one would have been puzzled to decide what order of the animal kingdom he belonged to.

In a very short time, one of the turtles began to take notice of this caudal appendage, which was behaving itself in so strange a manner; paddled slowly towards it, opened its jaws, and seized the end of the tail; but scarcely had it seized this new kind of bait, when the raccoon sprang suddenly forward, dragging the turtle after it clean out of the water, and throwing it upon the shore, where, by means of its muzzle, 207 it soon turned it over on its back, dexterously avoiding all the turtle's attempts to bite.*

* Not bad, M. Révoil. It reminds one of the story of the rat who emptied a flask of Florence oil, for the benefit of himself and his companions, by the aid of the same “caudal appendage.”— Trans.

The “snapping turtle” was now at the mercy of the raccoon, who was about to enjoy it at his leisure, when Downing took up his double-barrelled gun, which he had brought with him, and we walked from the shelter behind which we had been concealed. Directly he saw us, and heard Downing's voice, the raccoon jumped up a tree and was soon at the top. Unfortunately, however, for him, it was not lofty enough, and when Downing sighted him among the foliage, he handed me the weapon to shoot “the villain,” as he called him. I fired, and down fell the raccoon a few feet from the turtle, which lay struggling on its back. The raccoon was an old male with a splendid fur, which afterwards made me a magnificent hunting-cap, care being taken to preserve the tail, to hang down behind.

This diversion of our sport having come to an end, we returned to our turtle-fishing; and when the time arrived for our return to Fort Imperial, the waters of Lake Worth had yielded up to us seventeen fine turtles, including that which was caught by the raccoon. One of Downing's men, driving a Florida mustang in a light cart, took the fish and ourselves 208 to Downing's home, where an exquisite supper of turtle again delighted us.

It was on the following day that Downing had arranged to start for Hetera, where a band of “wreckers” was to meet us and aid in the turtle-fishing there. Close to his house, my host had a handsome decked fishing-boat riding at anchor—a boat of about twenty tons, and manned by a couple of hands. It was on board this stout pinnace that we all four embarked on the morning of the 27th of June, 1848. Thanks to a favourable breeze, we soon found ourselves clear of the rocks and in the open sea, dashing the white foam from our bows, and speeding silently across the water as it sparkled with light. Before us, and on either side of the boat, shoals of flying-fish sported among the sea-weeds, sponges, and corals, with which the bottom of the sea was thickly covered. Afar off, we could see the great Bahamas reefs, like so many points on the horizon; but as we advanced they

grew more and more distinct, and we could see that they were clothed with the rich livery of the tropics, and that they offered to our sight a variety of shades and colours, rendered still more delicate by the purity of the sky and the brightness of the sun. It was like a fairy *spectacle* , and in gazing on it I almost forgot the first approaches of the sea-sickness which had already begun to trouble me.

Three hours after quitting the mainland, we were 209 at Hetera, where we cast anchor in a deep creek, sheltered from every wind. At the far end of the creek we found a tent and a hut built of intertwined foliage, which Downing told me was the home of the “wreckers.” They had just returned from a very fortunate adventure, which they narrated to us even to the minutest detail. After Downing had introduced me to their chief, we sat down to supper.

The “wreckers” had good store of fish, which they served up with all manner of sauces; venison steaks had, however, the preference, and there were roast wild ducks and curlews. It will surprise no one that such a meal, set before men whose strong appetites were sharpened by the salt air of the sea, was disposed of in silence until the edge of hunger was taken off; but when the dessert was set on, consisting of bananas and other Bahaman fruits, they began to give toasts and sing. To this day I remember a verse of one of the wreckers' songs, and it ran somewhat after this fashion:—

Sparkle flames with gleams of gold, From the sea-crag let 'em flash, Let them warn the helmsman bold, Lest upon the rock he dash. Wreckers! lend a hand to save Human life from wat'ry grave! But whatever we can snatch From stern Neptune's gloomy powers, In reward for careful watch, Brothers, friends, the treasure's ours. That is the law! It is the law! VOL. II P

210

Two-and-twenty voices sang the chorus of each verse, and I can assure the reader that, in the stilly evening, this primitive concert produced quite an imposing effect.

After that, we all talked about the peculiar fishery which brought us to the Bahamas, and as night drew on, preparations were commenced. It was necessary to be on the spot some time before the turtles quitted the water to lay their eggs in the sandbanks best adapted for hatching the progeny. These little islands, divided by deep channels and formed of broken and comminuted shells, are close to the great coral reef which is so frequented by the ocean *Chelonia.* The whole bottom of the sea along the coasts of Florida is covered with a thick layer of coral, coralines, sea-weeds, and other crops of the deep, which give shelter to an innumerable quantity of crustacea. About these sandbanks, innumerable flocks of sea-birds are flying night and day, looking at a distance like swarms of enormous flies. We arrived at the great sandbank just as the god of day was plunging into the sea. To any one who has never seen a sun-set in these latitudes, it is a grand and glorious spectacle, unequalled by anything I know of. One-fifth of the vast, red disc, whose dimensions seem tripled, has disappeared below the line of the waters, and the part still visible is adorned with a fringe of purple clouds which float upon the horizon. Through the gates of the west 211 you may see the dazzling brilliance of the sun's glory, and might imagine that you were gazing into a furnace that bubbled with liquid seas of gold. On a sudden, the orb disappears, as if it had plunged itself into the sea, and the grey veil which night draws over the world ascends slowly from the east.

The sea-breeze freshened at the same moment, and the terns, Mother Cary's chickens, and halcyons, took the place of the day birds. Slowly in the distance sailed by a frigate, or some other vessel. Half an hour afterwards, Downing, who was posted by my side behind a heap of sand which served us both for a shelter and a hiding-place, pointed out to me, swimming slowly towards the shore with only their heads above water, some turtles, which had all the indications of being large and of good quality. I could just make out their broad back-shells on the scarcely ruffled surface of the water which separated the islet on which we stood from the sandy shore of its neighbour, and as they advanced slowly and with effort, the breeze carried towards us the sound of their quickened respiration, which indicated either uneasiness or terror.

Suddenly the moon rose and lighted up the fantastic scene. A turtle, having reached the shore, was dragging its weight along the sand, for the fins are better adapted for swimming than for waddling upon the solid earth. At last, she reached the desired spot and set herself laboriously to work, P 2 212 dexterously throwing aside the sand under her to the right and left, and when the hole was deep enough she deposited her eggs in it, arranging them with the greatest care, and covering them with sand. Just as she was turning about to regain the sea, Downing bounded on her, like a tiger on his prey, striking her a severe blow on the shell close to the head, which paralysed her with terror for a moment, when he turned her over on her back, in which position she lay, helplessly flapping her fins and totally unable to stir.

We had barely regained our hiding-place, when Downing called my attention to an enormous turtle, which was making its way towards the shore. At about thirty yards' distance from the sand, she raised her head above the water and looked around her with an unquiet air, passing in careful review everything that was in sight. This done, she gave a shrill whistle, which Downing told me was a kind of challenge or warning to any enemies that might be lying in wait, and was intended to frighten them away. As nothing stirred, she swam slowly towards the shore, and came up the sand with her neck stretched to the utmost. At last, she found a convenient place, and proceeded to act exactly as her predecessor had done. In five minutes, she had hollowed out, to a depth of about eighteen inches, a hole in which she deposited her eggs, one after another, to the number of a hundred and seventy-seven; 213 for we counted them before quitting the island. These eggs, which were as large as hens' eggs, were quite round and covered only with a tough white skin.

This was a big-headed turtle, and Downing, who knew how to manage with each kind, darted on her suddenly before she had completed her task. He afterwards explained to me that, until that was accomplished, she was incapable of resistance.

“Help me!” he cried, as he placed himself in front of the turtle, and got his shoulder behind one of the fore-fins, raising it slightly and pushing with all his strength, and then, with a little aid and a sudden effort, he got it on its back. As this turtle was a very large one and began to struggle violently, Downing deemed it prudent to tie up her fins in such a way that it was impossible for her to move.

This done, we proceeded to make other captures, and as the sport grew very amusing, we went on as long as any turtles presented themselves to be turned. When all was over, the wreckers, Downing, and his two men, had caught fifty-six turtles in about two hours and a-half.

As soon as they had stowed away the prey in the bottoms of the boats, they began to hunt for eggs. Armed with sticks or iron spikes, the egg-hunters spread themselves over the sand, sounding it wherever there were any traces of the turtles. It is not, however, very easy to discover the exact spots, 214 for the drifting of the sand, caused by winds and waves, frequently effaces all the indications very effectually. Before returning to Hetera Creek, the wreckers, Downing and his men, and myself, managed to turn up eighteen nests, and to gather nearly seven hundred eggs.*

* The eggs of the turtle are taken away, and frequently indeed consumed on the spot, in large quantities. This will astonish nobody, when I state that on some of the Bahama islets, and all the islands known as Florida Keys, the eggs of many hundreds of turtles may be found within the space of a mile. The green turtles dig a fresh hole for each laying; the second is generally close to the first, as if the turtle had no recollection of its former misfortune. It is easy to understand that the multitude of eggs in a turtle's belly are not all intended to be laid in the same year. The largest quantity which a single green turtle lays at once is about 400. When a turtle is taken upon its nest in the act of laying, the eggs are found in the body quite small, without covering, and massed together in quantities numbering up to 3000. A short time after they are hatched, the little turtles find a way through the sand which covers them, and so into the sea. Nothing can be more curious

than to see this army of small turtles, not larger than small crabs, crawling towards the ocean with great rapidity.

The take was a very good one, and when we got back again to the tent at Hetera, a comfortable supper was waiting for us, and as we were eating it I heard many of my companions narrating a variety of strange anecdotes concerning the sea-turtles.

Among other matters worth repeating, I noted down these:—The green-coated turtles are so abundant on these shores that five or six hundred men could live upon them for many months without requiring any other kind of food. The turtle of Hetera are unusually large and fat, and their meat is so 215 delicate that it is as tender as that of a fowl. The way of talking turtles which I have described is not the only one practised on the coasts of the Floridas. The turtle-fishers lay enormous nets with large meshes at the months of the rivers, and catch the turtles in great quantities. Others use the harpoon, but the turtles have such a power of locomotion that they tell a story of a Caribee Indian whose canoe was dragged for two nights and a day by a harpooned turtle, and the poor Indian not having a knife, was unable to cut the cord which fastened him to the turtle.*

* Very good, M. Révoil; but he might have untied it.— Trans.

Downing himself had invented an apparatus for taking turtles in the daytime. It was an iron implement, which he called *the pin* , armed at either end with a point like a headless nail, something like what net-makers use, quadrangular, flat at the sides, and shaped something like the beak of a pick. To the centre of this instrument, by means of a hole bored through the pin, he fastened a fine though extremely strong snood of wire about a hundred yards long; the rest of the line was of strong cord, carefully coiled and stowed away in a convenient part of the boat. One end of the pin fitted into an iron socket which confined it, in such a manner as to be readily set free, to a long wooden shaft, whilst the carapace of the turtle could be transfixed by the 216 other point. When the fisherman, seated in his boat, sees a turtle come up to the top of the water, he approaches as quietly

as possible, and, when he gets within ten or a dozen yards, he throws his spear right at the middle of his back, so as to transfix him. Directly the turtle is hit, the wooden handle is loosened from the pin, the turtle, maddened with pain, begins to struggle convulsively, and the more it does so the deeper does the pin become inserted into the wound, and after a great deal of cautious playing the fisherman usually succeeds in bringing his prey alongside. Downing told me that, in this way alone, one of his men managed to catch eight hundred turtles in one year.

Next morning at daybreak Downing awoke me and took me to his reservoir, a sort of square construction or wooden enclosure, built of enormous stumps separated from each other, so that the tide could get in, but the turtles could not get out. There we found all the turtles which had been caught the night before, having been brought thither by the boats. They were crawling about and doing their best to get out again to the sea. Flight, however, was quite impossible.

It had been settled that we should spend two days at Hetera, to fish and shoot. I enjoyed a good deal of the latter sport along the shore and in the woods, where I found at great variety of water-fowl, besides stags, pheasants, parrots, and other talking-birds. 217 But the most amusing kind of sport, after all, was the turtle-fishing as practised by Downing's men, one of whom was a very skilful diver.

The second day, after breakfast, Downing took me out to sea, and showed me a large number of turtles floating asleep upon the tranquil water, and this was how the fishing was managed, without implement of any kind. Pero (that was the diver's name) stood up in the bow of the boat, and as soon as he was within seven or eight yards of the turtle he dived and rose close to the sleeping creature. Then he seized it near the tail. As soon as the turtle woke up, he began to struggle with his fins, and this motion was sufficient to keep it on the surface, where it remained paddling about until the boat came up and pulled in both man and turtle. That day, I bade farewell to the “wreckers” of Hetera, and returned to Fort Imperial.

On parting from my host, he presented me with a splendid big-headed turtle, weighing over five hundred pounds. I enjoyed in anticipation the turtle suppers and turtle steaks, which I hoped to offer to my friends in New York, whither I returned with my prize, calculated the number of eggs to be found in its enormous body, and pictured to myself what a beautiful ornamental car I would have made of its carapace,—a car in which Venus might once more float upon the blue sea (“ *cæruleum mare* ”), on condition, of course, that her doves would render their assistance, 218 and that no shark appeared to swallow up the fair divinity. Occupied with these thoughts, I embarked on board the steamer at Savannah, and placed my turtle under the care of one of the sailors on board, with strict injunctions to feed it with vegetables and salt water. When we entered New York Bay, the weather was calm, and feeling a kind of respite from the sea-sickness, I mounted upon deck. After taking a turn or two, I thought I would go forward and ask about my green turtle.

“Well, Johnny, and how goes the turtle?”

“Oh! dear me, Sir.”

“What's the matter?”

“Oh! Sir.”

“What is it, Johnny? Is it dead?”

“No, sir.”

“What then?”

“Why, sir, it is—”

“Come, come, you scamp, speak out.”

“It fell in the sea during a blow.”

I must confess that I did not put much faith in this statement. I complained to the captain, who answered me that he didn't know what I meant, and that he wasn't responsible for passengers' luggage; I was obliged to put a good face upon the matter, and curse my bad luck at my leisure. So ended my dreams of turtle suppers and the rest.

The very evening after my arrival at New York, I was walking along the Broadway, when what was 219 my astonishment at seeing, at the corner of Park Place, and before the door of a celebrated restaurant, a turtle exactly resembling that which Downing had given me, and which, if Johnny was to be believed, had fallen into the sea.

“I beg your pardon,” said I to the bar-keeper, “have you any objection to tell me how you became possessed of that splendid turtle at the door?”

“Not the slightest,” said he; “just as we were shutting up last night, two sailors brought it here and sold it me for six pounds. And I thought I made a very good bargain.”

“By Jove! so you did; and I, from whom that very turtle was stolen, and to whom it really belongs, will give you the money to have my own again.”

I then explained to the bar-keeper what had happened to me; but as he had taken an order for a very fine dinner to the Aldermen of New York, which was to take place on the following day, he felt obliged to refuse to do me the justice I required. I complained to the chief of the New York police, but got laughed at for my pains. Full of choler, I rushed on board the steamer *Rainbow* , determined to have my revenge out of Johnny, but he had started that very morning for Boston. So I was fain to swallow my grievance in silence, and to swear, though somewhat too late, that if ever I had another turtle for a travelling companion, I would have it taken to my cabin and feed it myself.

220

XIII.—THE NEW BRUNSWICK SEA-LIONS.

I had often heard tell of the Sea Lion as one of the largest seals of the Arctic regions, and many a time, in my conversations with sea captains, who had returned from Labrador, I had inquired about the localities frequented by these monstrous amphibia. It seems that it is especially on the coasts of the State of New Brunswick, in Upper Canada, about Chaleur Bay, opposite the Madeline Islands, that the sea-lions are found in the greatest numbers. The nature of the soil, the peculiar herbs that grow at the bottom of the sea, the comparative tranquillity that reigns in those regions, so remote from all the haunts of civilisation, all concur in attracting them to these waters, where morning and evening, and sometimes at mid-day, the shore may be seen covered with the sea-lion.

One day at New York, thanks to my profession as a journalist and a traveller, I was informed that a political meeting was to take place at Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia, and was requested to go thither for the purpose of reporting the speeches and debates, and telegraph them immediately to the newspaper to which I was attached. I took my passage on board one of the Cunard steamers, and, 221 not forgetting my portmanteau and gun-case, committed myself to the mercy of the ocean.

I will spare my readers the details of the passage and of the political meeting, where the speakers nearly came to blows and tearing each other's hair, after mutual abuse worthy of scavengers, and will come at once to the adventure with the sea-lions which it is my intention to describe.

In order to return to New York when my task was over, I had to wait for the trans-Atlantic steamer from Liverpool, Which calls at Halifax; and what could I do to amuse myself for a week in the capital of Nova Scotia? The problem was difficult of solution, and I should have had some trouble in solving it, but for one of the “new friends” I made during the first day of my stay in Halifax. “You tell me,” said he, “how fond you are of sport. If you please, I'll introduce you to a cousin of mine, Daniel Tevis, a great sportsman, and he'll show you

some fun before you go back to the Yankees.” Thus saying, he led the way to his cousin's house, and formally presented me.

“You are just in time, good Sir,” quoth Mr. Tevis, after bidding me welcome. “Only this morning I received a visit from an Esquimaux, whose acquaintance I made last year on the coasts of New Brunswick. He is pressing me to come and share for a few days a little hunting and fishing with his tribe. He has come here, to buy ammunition, &c., 222 from the village of his tribe, which he calls Kamanatignia. It stands somewhere near Gasp Point, at the north of New Brunswick. If we start to-night we shall get there to-morrow morning. How say you?”

To run back to my hotel, dress myself as warmly as possible, put together my gun, and procure all necessary ammunition, was my practical reply to Mr. Tevis's proposal, and when I returned to his house ready harnessed and equipped for the march, I merely observed, “Well, here I am. I hope I haven't kept you waiting for me.”

The Esquimaux, who was to be our guide, had not yet returned, although he had promised my new friend to start before sunset, and we guessed it as not improbable that he was lingering in some bar-room, attracted by the charms of brandy, gin, or rum. Our forebodings proved only too accurate, for when the wretch came to seek us towards the end of the dinner which Mr. Tevis very hospitably invited me to share with him, he could scarcely keep his balance. Fortunately, however, though reason had fled, he still had a little instinct left, and without him we never should have found the road leading to Kamanatignia.

When the sleigh arrived at the house, we all three got into it, with our baggage and Mr. Tevis's dogs, and the signal for departure was given. The horse, which was covered with little bells, and made an infernal 223 noise, was guided entirely by the Esquimaux's voice, crying “Right!” “Left!” “Straight on!” At about six in the morning, thanks to the moonlight which had lit up all our journey, we arrived at a mass of huts built of mud and clay, and

covered with pine branches. To speak the truth, the appearance of an Esquimaux village is not very picturesque. All around us were spread scraps and relics of fishing banquets, tainted meat, and other abominations, the nauseating smell of which was scarcely abated by the severity of the cold. Nor was this all we had to endure; for as soon as the return of Maroah (as our guide was called) was made known, and that he had brought with him two gentlemen from town, the whole tribe of Esquimaux, men, women, and children, rushed out from their cabins and surrounded us with shouts of joy. All these, without exception, were so covered with dirt and vermin that at the very sight of them we recoiled with horror. They, however, paid little attention to the disgust which they inspired; the feeling of repugnance at anything was unknown to them, and they could not understand it in any one else. The rules of politeness among the Esquimaux imperatively require that every inhabitant of a village, from the oldest man to the infant who has just begun to toddle, should come forward, salute you and give you a grasp of the hand, and this ceremony was gone through in our honour with the greatest solemnity, and amid a 224 silence which succeeded preceding manifestations of joy.

When this official reception as was at an end, my friend Tevis and myself had to sustain a fire of interrogations which succeeded each other with great rapidity, and were sometimes repeated by those who had already heard our answers. “What country do you come from?” “Is it far beyond the sea?” “Is it the country where tobacco grows?” “Is it where they make powder?” To the questions, succeeded the answers, and to the answers fresh questions. While my companion and myself were thus detained by the men of the village, I observed an extraordinary activity on the part of the female part of the population. It was really a curious spectacle to see these creatures, who are accounted beautiful by the majority of the human race, but who, under the forty-eighth degree of latitude, certainly furnished an exception to that flattering description. The Esquimaux females, as they ran about from one hut to another, looked for all the world just like witches getting ready for their sabbath. The result of all this tumult and preparation was, that a deputation came forward to invite

us into one of the huts, a gloomy and miserable hovel, full of smoke, and populated by myriads of various insects.

Tevis and myself made the best of the matter, and when the fire which our hosts had lighted blazed up, we did our best to conquer our repugnance. The 225 interior arrangements of this Kamanatignian abode were as follows:—The ground was covered with beams, placed over each other so as to form a kind of flooring; the roof, which had a pyramidal form, was covered with trunks of trees sawn into thin planks, and covered with pine branches solidly fastened to a fragile wall. It is the custom of the Kamanatignian architects to line the interior of their erections with turf, so as to give more heat to the inhabitants.

The Esquimaux's hut is usually divided into two, throughout its length, (that is to say, from the door to the wall at the farther end,) by parallel beams. These are crossed by others, which extend from side to side of the hut. In this manner, it is divided into nine sections, of which the three nearest the door are set apart for storing wood, clothes, household utensils, &c.; the three nearest the hinder wall are used for provisions and the finer sorts of utensils. As for the other three divisions in the middle, the largest, which lies under the opening in the roof (which is intended to allow the smoke to escape), serves for the sitting-room. The compartment to the right of this is occupied by the head of the family and his wife, and that to the left by the other inhabitants of the hut. If the family is very numerous, the less important members lodge how best they can.

The village of Kamanatignia did not, however, entirely consist of huts. The Esquimaux had constructed, VOL. II Q 226 within a few yards of their dwellings, reservoirs for fish, built upon large beams, so as to be beyond the reach of the wolves, foxes, bears, and other omnivorous or ichthyophagous creatures. The Esquimaux live principally upon fish,—fresh, salt, smoked, raw, or cooked. During my stay with the inhabitants of Kamanatignia, I experimented upon raw fish, and I deliberately declare that, with the help of a little salt, it is very passable food, and with a spoonful of vinegar becomes positively relishing.

All round the Esquimaux village we found sheep, dogs, and small cows of the English breed, browsing and feeding upon the stunted herbage within the narrow limits of their enclosures. In winter, when there is a lack of food, and when hunting is quite impossible, and fishing is nearly so, these poor beasts are slaughtered, and the meat is salted and smoked for the sustenance of the Esquimaux, confined to their cabins by the snow-drifts.

The cookery of the Esquimaux can boast of no great variety of sauces, and has none of the artifices of Carême and Brillat-Savarin. These would be of little service to it, for there is no need to excite the appetites of those who are always hungry. If they kill a buck, they cook him in his own fat, after chopping up the meat into small pieces. The tongue of a deer is one of their daintiest dishes, The fat and (above all) the marrow from the bones are looked 227 upon as a regal delicacy. The Kamanatignians cook the blood and eat it for soup. Sometimes they keep it frozen up in the veins, and eat it in winter as if it were a precious conserve.

There is usually a great deal of variety in the larders of the Esquimaux hunters, or rather in the game to be found hanging from the rafters of their store-rooms. Almost every one at Kamanatignia had good store of smoked bears' hams and grouse, salted and packed in small barrels. During our stay with them, they made sauces of great variety, into the composition of which myrtle seed, juniper, and stalks of angelica and rhubarb entered largely. They made us taste preserved mulberries and angelica, stowed in boxes made of birch bark, which kept the fruits fresh, and preserved their piquant aroma. The principal beverages of the Esquimaux of Kamanatignia were diluted milk, meat soup and broths, but principally pure water. In winter, the cauldron placed on the fire, and fed with snow and ice, supplies the Esquimaux with the means of quenching their thirst, and they drink the warm water without the slightest repugnance. A wooden ladle is used to scoop the beverage out of the pot.

On the very evening of our arrival at Kamanatignia, Tevis, Maroah, and myself were seated by the fire of our hut, enjoying a dinner which we had cooked with our own hands,

and which consisted of fish, and broiled steaks of fresh bear's meat, the whole Q 2 228 being washed down by a bottle of excellent port, when the chief hunter of the tribe (who was named Tucurora) asked permission to be allowed to hold some conversation with the whites. Of course, he came close upon the heels of his message, and after he had squatted down upon a rein-deer's skin, and lighted his pipe at the hearth, he began a series of questions which were faithfully translated to us by our friend Maroah. The upshot of the talk (thus translated by an Esquimaux dragoman) was, that we were to go and hunt for sea-lions on the following day, and that the creatures were to be found in great abundance on the little islets on the eastern coast below St. John's. The greater part of these islets were of so slight elevation that sometimes, when the sea was tempestuous, they would be entirely submerged. It was to these islets, nevertheless, that the fishermen resorted to lie in wait for the herds of sea-lions that came from the depths of the ocean to repose upon their shores.

Usually, the Esquimaux fishermen endeavoured to get to windward of the herd, so that the creatures, whose sense of smell is very delicate, should not suspect their approach. They took great care, moreover, to speak very low, and not to make the slightest noise. Sometimes it happened that whole weeks would be consumed in effecting an approach, but in the end a whole island would be covered with seals, each line as it emerged from the ocean driving 229 its predecessor farther inland, and then the sea-lions would lie down and sleep in peace, quite unconscious of the danger which threatened them. During this sleep, the fishermen surround the island on all sides, taking the greatest care not to awaken the game.

These details were very circumstantially described to my friend Tevis and myself by Maroah and his comrade, and we were deeply interested by them. It appeared, moreover, that an Esquimaux, who had been stationed as sentinel to watch the island nearest the coast, had announced that evening, just before sunset, the arrival of the sea-lions, and the chase was arranged for the following day; so that we were just in time.

Our preparations were soon made. We had no need of our guns, but of a peculiar weapon, of which both Tevis and myself were to receive a specimen before we started with the Esquimaux. What this weapon was, Maroah refused to gratify our curiosity by explaining beforehand. We were to be up at sunrise, so taking his advice we retired early. I will pass over the inconveniences of our first night among the Esquimaux, and spare the reader a description of the various and innumerable live-stock which banqueted on our unhappy bodies. It is astonishing what we may get accustomed to, and I am almost ashamed to confess that, after the first night, I paid very little attention to these insects of prey.

230

About seven o'clock in the morning, Maroah presented himself at our hut, whistling an air, which, as I afterwards learnt, was the national air of the country. He found us already risen, dressed, and ready to start. The Esquimaux carried in his hand two weapons sharpened like a baker's peel (*pelle*), with this difference only, that they were made of one piece of wood. Fastened to his girdle he had a third weapon of the same kind.

“Good morning, gentlemen,” he cried; “everybody is ready and only waiting for you. Here are your two knock-em-downs, and be sure you hit the sea-lions hard over the head. If you don't, you'll have to come back empty-handed.” He then explained to us that these weapons were for the purpose of striking the sea-lion across the face, so as to stun him and render him as incapable of resistance as a rabbit when he has been hit behind the head.

On quitting the hut, a strange spectacle presented itself. Nearly two hundred skiffs were floating on the sea, all made of branches of trees, with sea-lions' or cows' skins stretched over them, and sewed together with great care, so as to be quite impervious to water. In these, were about four hundred and fifty natives, all armed with weapons similar to our own.

The leader of the expedition, Tucurora, was in a canoe of birch bark, a much larger boat than the others, in which three places were reserved for Tevis, 231 Maroah, and myself. To jump in, crouch down, and remain immovable, was the work of an instant. A few minutes afterwards, the signal for departure was given, and the little flotilla advanced in perfect order over the clear waves of Kamanatignia Bay, everybody keeping the most profound silence. The island on which the sea-lions were to be found was directly in front of us, and from a tree which was growing on the eastern side fluttered a rag, the signal of the scout who was lying hid among the branches of the friendly tamarisk. When we got to the windward of the island, Tucurora slackened the speed of his boat, and the extremities of the line quickened theirs so as to turn the sides of the island. In about a quarter of an hour, the chief passed the question in a whisper, and received for answer that the island was entirely surrounded. He then gave the signal of advance towards the island, and with the whole line following his example proceeded to draw the *cordon* tighter and tighter.

On looking towards the shore, which was of sand and extended from some rocks to the sea, the astonishment of Tevis and myself was indescribable at finding it covered with animals lying side by side as closely as possible. These were the seals (*Otaria*) or sea-lions. These creatures differ from the common seal in that they have a mane of curly hair over their shoulders, and enormous feelers or mustachios at least ten inches long. The conformation of the 232 muzzle and of the head resembles, moreover, that of the king of beasts. Here, however, the analogy ends; for, like all their congeners, *desinit in piscem* is the rule which governed their creation, and the lower end is broad and powerful, and, comparatively speaking, as dangerous as that of a shark.

These poor lions (about the most inoffensive of all the creatures that inhabit the depths of the ocean) were sleeping soundly, and had not even set one of their number to watch over the safety of the whole community.

Tucurora led the attack. We saw him leap on shore at a bound, and strike over the head an enormous sea-lion that happened to be nearest him. The other Esquimaux followed the

example of their chief, and the slaughter commenced forthwith, Tevis and myself holding our own with the best,—such is the force of example.

The slaughtered seals were heaped up on the margin of the water, and made, as it were, a kind of wall to prevent the escape of the others. The seals were thus quite hemmed in, and had no means of escaping from the murderous blows of the Esquimaux. The sea-lion, like the deer, weeps when he is about to be killed, and the cries of these poor brutes more than once stayed the arms of Tevis and myself. The Esquimaux, however, were less scrupulous. They struck without mercy to the right and to the left, and every blow was a mortal one. In less than half-an-hour 233 the whole herd was exterminated, and two lions only, out of the whole lot, had escaped. The prey was divided between the hunters, according to the number that each had killed. After knocking over a seal, the slayer set his mark upon it, making, at the same time, another on his weapon, so as to check the tally. Altogether, the number of seals massacred by the party amounted to two hundred and twenty-nine males and three hundred females, of all sizes

The chief's canoe made several voyages that day bearing the spoil homewards, and so also did the boats of other inhabitants of Kamanatignia. That evening, all the seals were heaped up in front of the huts. Next day, they set to work to prepare the fat, skins, and meat. The stench that prevailed during these culinary operations,—which was more like the cooking of the witches in “Macbeth” than any more civilised proceedings,—never have I experienced a more abominable stink. By way of escape from this pestilential atmosphere, my companion and myself threw our guns over our shoulders and climbed some of the hills in the neighbourhood after grouse. After a great deal of trouble, we succeeded in bagging two brace of those birds, and they served us for a capital supper.

I may add, parenthetically, that the Esquimaux do not use firearms to kill grouse. When the snow covers the ground, they cut strong twigs of birch and fasten them firmly in the earth. These twigs 234 are fork-shaped, and they have snares depending from them of very simple construction. By way of bait, a few juniper and birch seeds are scattered around,

of both of which the grouse are very fond, and they fall easy victims to this method of catching them. A single Esquimaux family will not unfrequently possess some hundreds of these snares, and in a favourable year they will take from 1,500 to 2,000 head of game. In the spring, they will catch the cock grouse without even being at the pains to stir. It is only necessary to imitate the cry of the hen-bird, and the cocks, without more ado, rush straight into the jaws of the enemy. Maroah (who communicated to us many details of Esquimaux sport) told us that at one time they used to fish for sea-lions in the open sea with nets; but this method was not much esteemed, for it frightened the amphibia, and consequently diminished the produce of the fishery; so it was abandoned. In the month of March, when the ice is broken up and the icebergs of Newfoundland and Labrador float past Kamanatignia, the fishermen again venture out in pursuit of sea-lions, which may then be found lying among the floes of ice.

Some years ago, the Esquimaux used to hunt the sea-lions at the time when they returned northwards to bring forth their little ones. The main object of this was to get possession of the little cubs, whose fur is very soft and white, and sells for a good price. 235 The winter fishing, however, is attended with considerable peril; but neither the tears of their families, nor the fear of the death which so often threatens them, can restrain the inhabitants of Kamanatignia. Accustomed to danger, they have only the profits of their adventure in view. They start from home in bands, carrying with them the necessary implements and provisions. After two or three days' march, they commence operations on the large bay which extends northwards from about thirty miles above Kamanatignia. This is a vast expanse of frozen water; under its surface large numbers of sea-lions are to be found. When the females have brought forth their young, they make holes in the ice by melting it with their warm breath, and when they have accomplished this they mount up upon the ice, taking their little ones with them, which are then quite at the mercy of the fishermen.

Sometimes it happens that, whilst the Esquimaux are in pursuit of their prey, the ice breaks up and they are carried out to sea on the great ice floes. Only imagine the fate of a poor wretch, floating hopelessly on, the mere sport of the current, and with nothing to

expect but a dreadful death; the very ice beneath him wearing away, and melting gradually day by day and hour by hour.

Usually the ice breaks up so quietly that man can perceive no symptom of it. If a horse be with him, however, he gives the first warning by sniffing the 236 air and beating with his hoofs. To convince himself, the fisherman then bores a hole, through which he thrusts a stick, at the end of which is a rope with a stone fastened to it. If the perpendicular line changes its direction, the fisherman makes all haste he can to the mainland, sometimes leaving even his sledge and all its contents behind him. Sometimes he has to throw himself into the sea, and gains the land that way; but if the ice-floe be too far from the shore, he must perforce resign himself to his fate, and take the chance of some unlooked-for aid.

During my stay in the United States, some months after my visit to the Esquimaux, a Liverpool ship brought to New York one of these sea-hunters who had been picked up in the open sea near the 47th degree of latitude, in the direction of the Faroe Islands. The poor wretch had nothing but skin upon his bones; he had eaten absolutely nothing for thirty-six hours. For fifteen days, he had been the sport of the currents, and three times the berg on which he was floating had rolled over and changed its position. From what a frightful death had he escaped!

Seasons like these are, however, quite inoperative to prevent the Esquimaux from fishing in the open sea. Forgetful of past dangers, the love of gain tempts him on, and again he starts on his perilous journeys as soon as he can replace the sleigh and implements which he has lost. Unfortunately, the fate of some of these poor creatures is less fortunate 237 than that of the man who was picked up, and instead of being rescued by friendly ships, the sea-lion hunters perish miserably of cold and hunger, or they are drowned in the icy waves, or crushed by the breaking-up of the floes beneath them.

I will not inflict upon my readers an account of a bear-hunt and an expedition after cariboo which Tevis and I enjoyed with our hosts at Kamanatignia. These two excursions among the woody mountains which form the background of the bay of the River of St. Lawrence had nothing remarkable or characteristic about them. We returned to Kamanatignia with two bears and five cariboo.

Five days after our arrival among the Esquimaux, Tevis and I started homeward in the direction of Halifax, where I arrived just in time to bid farewell to my excellent companion and fellow-sportsman, and get on board the Cunard steamer *Asia.* Twenty-four hours afterwards I landed at New York to resume my functions as a journalist, and to publish my adventures among the Esquimaux of the bay of the islands of St. John.

238

XIV.—THE GREAT SEA SERPENT.

The bed of the ocean, by its structure and the accidents of its surface, exactly resembles certain parts of the dry land, which, at an epoch more or less remote, have manifestly belonged to the oceanic basin, and still present undoubted proofs of their origin.

The lesser islands in the sea are nothing but the summits of mountains, whose bases repose upon the deep sea valleys, and in the intervals between are ravines and rocky precipices, as steep, as irregular, and as abrupt as those which we find among the mountain chains of the continent. The lead-line discovers eminences, mountains, and valleys, separated by abysses, the arrangement of which is neither less varied nor less astonishing than that which we observe in the geodesic configuration of the dry land. The submerged valleys are clothed with thick-set vegetation, and are peopled by innumerable nomade races,* and in comparison with some of the latter, our land monsters, such as the elephant, the giraffe, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus, are little better than pigmies.

* With submission to M. Révoil, it should be noted that the balance of scientific opinion is against the existence of either animal or vegetable life at the great depths of the sea.—Trans.

239

The medium height of the dry land over the surface of the sea is nearly three hundred and thirty yards; in Asia, it is more; in Africa, it is unknown; in Europe, it is considerably below this estimate; and in America it is somewhat below it in the north, and very much in excess of it in the south. On the other hand, if the basin of the ocean were levelled, it would lie at a depth of about four miles and a half below the surrounding continents. Depths of the ocean have been sounded to the depth of nearly seven miles, and it is calculated that the sea covers three-fourths of the surface of the globe. If, then, the crust of dry land could be detached and cast into the sea, the most elevated mountains would be insufficient to sound the greatest depths of the basin. What is there, then, surprising, in the supposition that in these unfathomable valleys there lie hid monsters of the deep that only visit the surface upon rare and extraordinary occasions?* The ancients, who seem to have been much more favoured than we moderns as to the apparition of these marine monsters, have left behind them records which have frequently been treated as fables, but which I thoroughly believe to be founded on reality. Among those monstrous creatures whose existence has been verified by evidence which it seems difficult to distrust, is the Kraken, or Mountain Fish, which must be one of the most remarkable creatures in the world, both as regards

* *Vide* preceding note.

240 its extraordinary size and its monstrous proportions. It is true that tradition not unfrequently changes truth into falsehood, and falsehood again into a worse falsehood still; but the lovers of the marvellous need not be ashamed to admit the evidence of a tradition which has survived the attacks of the incredulous from the very earliest times to our own days. According to this tradition, when the Kraken appears on the surface of the

water it looks more like an island or a reef of rocks than a fish, and if, in swimming beneath the surface, it happens to touch a ship, the crew will experience a series of shocks, precisely as if some submarine volcanic action were shaking them. Tradition also alleges that the Kraken never dies, but that Nature has refused it the means of propagating its species. Indeed, were it otherwise, it would be difficult for even the ocean to provide for a race of creatures so monstrous. These traditions, it should be remembered, are founded after all upon considerations which are only supposititious; but Nature has many such secrets which are concealed from human knowledge. Moreover, it is not only upon the evidence of ignorant and superstitious sailors and fishermen, that these traditions rest; more than one naturalist worthy of respect has confirmed and corroborated, certainly with some modifications, these traditions and legends.

From the infinite number of tales relative to this 241 monster of the deep I shall cite these:—About the latter end of the eighteenth century the inhabitants of the coast of Newfoundland, situate between the 48th and 50th degrees of latitude, and in the neighbourhood of Paré Legit, remarked that the atmosphere became so pestiferous, that when the wind blew from the sea it was foul enough to breed a plague. After searching about for the cause, it was at last discovered that this horrible and dangerous stench was caused by the carcase of a Kraken, which was lying among some rocks in the offing. I can find no record of the means used by the Newfound-landers to rid themselves of this fearful nuisance, but it was got rid of somehow, either by the help of the waves or the sea-birds. At any rate, it disappeared, and the threatened scourge was averted.

I have read that a certain Bishop of Norway, having heard from the fishermen that an unknown island had recently risen up in Bergen Bay, determined to celebrate Mass upon it. The surface of the island turned out to be very soft and slimy; but by the aid of a boat-load of sand, which had been brought for the purpose, an altar was set up, divine service was performed, and a cross erected in celebration of the event; when, just as the Bishop and his clerical attendants were re-embarking to return to the mainland, down dived the

island and disappeared under the waters, and it was then recognised that the supposed island was nothing but an enormous Kraken. VOL. II. R

242

An American captain, with whom I was very intimate at New York, told me that in 1836, finding himself among the Bahama Islands, his vessel was attacked by an enormous polyp or Kraken, which seized two of his crew with its enormous arms, and dragged them into the sea. Their shipmates endeavoured in vain to rescue them; but the helmsman managed with a hatchet to cut off one of the arms of the polyp, and this monstrous limb measured twelve feet long, and was of the bigness of a man's body. I have myself seen this curious specimen in Mr. Barnum's Museum at New York, where it may be seen (in a somewhat shrivelled state) sealed up in an enormous vessel of spirits of wine.

If any faith can be put in a votive tablet which I have seen hanging against the wall of the Chapel of Notre Dame de la Garde, at Marseilles, some sailors were attacked by a Kraken, which fastened itself to the masts of their ship and attempted to drag it under water, in which endeavour it would have succeeded, if the sailors had not managed to cut off one of its arms.

If we refer to still more remote ages, we shall find that Pliny gives a description of an enormous fish which was caught on the coast of Spain, which weighed more than seven thousand pounds, and the arms of which were so big that a man could not grasp their circumference. The exactness with which these ancient accounts agree with more 243 modern evidence leaves little room for doubting the existence of this creature, whose proportions seem to belong to the pre-Adamite period. The only question is, whether the witnesses have not been guilty of some exaggeration? Whether the fear which the presence of a monster would naturally inspire has not caused it to assume proportions still more terrific than those which really belong to it? Terror has a wonderful effect in multiplying feet into yards, and perhaps it has even endowed with the qualities of a living creature some object floating in the distance which, on nearer approach, might have

turned out to be something very different from what it was supposed to be. Not so. All these stories are not mere fables. Even men of science of our own days recognise the existence of the Kraken, only they have given him a learned name, that of *Cephalopod.* Let the reader picture to himself a soft, thick, viscous, muscular sack, spherical in some species, and cylindrical or spindleshaped in others, changing its colours like a chameleon, containing organs of respiration, an apparatus of circulation, a digestive canal, and a stomach comparable to the crop of a bird; put upon this sack a round head, furnished with a pair of large eyes, placed laterally, and between them a little tube, serving, not for the nose, but for the excrementary canal; on the top of the head put a mouth, consisting of a circular lip and armed with a pair of R 2 244 vertical jaws, like a parrot's beak, and furnished inside with a tongue bristling with horny protuberances; all round this mouth set a hedge of fleshy appendages, supple, vigorous, retractile, sometimes longer than the body itself, and frequently armed on their sides with two rows of suckers, and you will have some approximate idea of the *Cephalopoda* ,—so named by Cuvier, because they have their feet on their heads,—the appendages which I have just mentioned being, in fact, both feet and arms, and serving for every purpose of prehension and locomotion.

The *Cephalopods* are mollusks of the highest order. The nervous ganglions which are grouped around the œsophagus give them a kind of resemblance to the vertebrated animals. They have a lower order of brain, which is protected by a cartilage, which is a rudimentary skeleton, and communicates with the principal muscles. The circulation of the blood is like that of fishes. The eyes of some are quite like those of vertebrated animals, and in all species the sexes are distinct. These characteristics raise them to the foremost rank among the mollusks; nor are they without the dignity of an ancient origin, seeing that their creation dates back to very remote periods of the world's history.

All the known kinds of them are marine, and are carnivorous. Some frequent the open sea, and others hover about the coasts. The shores of the Mediterranean and, above all, those of Greece are 245 infected by them. They cause very great destruction among the crustacea and other fish, and their hiding-places may be discovered by the proofs

of their voracity lying about. They injure the fishermen, both by destroying the fish and frightening them from the neighbourhood, and the fishermen take their revenge by killing them whenever they get a chance.

When the Cephalopod attacks its prey, it turns, as it were, on its back; the sack is held up vertically; the arms are stretched out, the calamaries are held horizontally, and thus they seize their prey. With the larger kinds, their grasp is irresistible, and the victim soon feels the bite of the terrible parrot's beak, of which the extending arms are the purveyors. Men have been killed in this way, and the abundance of these huge jelly fish on the coasts of Greece renders bathing there extremely dangerous, whilst in the Polynesian Islands they are the terror of the divers. The common Cuttle-fish of the Mediterranean is about two feet long, but there is a species more than three times as large found in the Pacific Ocean.

It is pretty certain, however, that Cephalopods are in existence which far exceed in bulk the largest proportions which zoological treatises assign to them. Thus Peron found on the shores of Tasmania a Cuttle-fish, the arms of which were from seven to eight inches in diameter, and six to seven feet long. 246 Messrs. Quoy and Gaymard found in the Atlantic Ocean, near the equator, the remains of a monster belonging to this family, the weight of which they estimated at nearly three hundred pounds; and in the same waters Rang saw one of a red colour, which was of the bigness of a large cask. M. Streenstrup, of Copenhagen, has published some interesting observations upon a Cephalopod to which he gave the name of *Architeuthis Dux* , which was thrown, in the year 1853, upon the coast of Jutland. The body, which was cut up and divided among the fishermen for bait, filled several barrows. The pharynx was preserved, and was as large as a child's head. A section of an arm, which was shown to M. Duméril, was as large as an average thigh. Finally, in 1860, M. Harting figured and described several parts of a gigantic creature of this kind which is preserved in the Utrecht Museum; but all these accounts yield in interest to that which was communicated a winter ago to the Académie des Sciences.

Library of Congress

On the 30th of November, 1861, at two o'clock in the afternoon, the steam despatch-boat *Alecto* (commanded by Lieutenant Bowyer) going between Madeira and Teneriffe, and then being about forty leagues to the north-east of the latter, met with an enormous Cephalopod, swimming upon the surface of the water.

The creature was from eighteen to twenty feet 247 long, and it had eight formidable arms issuing out of its head, each about six feet long and covered with suckers. Its colour was a reddish brick-dust. Its eyes, which were on a level with its head, were of enormous size, and of terrible fixity. Its mouth, which was shaped like a parrot's beak, was about twenty inches long. Its body was spindle-shaped, only much enlarged towards the centre. Its swimming apparatus was placed in the hinder part, and consisted of two rounded lobes of considerable volume.

Finding himself in the presence of one of these strange creatures which the ocean sometimes yields up from its depths as if to put human science at defiance, Lieutenant Bowyer resolved to examine it more closely, and attempt, if possible, to capture it. He stopped the engines immediately, guns were charged, a slip-knot and harpoons prepared; but, unfortunately, a strong swell which was running at the time disturbed the arrangements, and the creature, which seemed to have a sort of intelligence of danger, shifted its ground, and seemed to desire to avoid the ship; the *Alecto* , however, gave chase.

At the first discharge of bullets which it received, the monster dived under the ship and appeared on the other side, rising immediately to the surface, and waving its arms about. Another broadside of ten bullets was then administered; some of which passed through the creature without effect, but others caused 248 it to vomit a large quantity of foam and blood, mixed with a glutinous fluid which spread around a strong odour of musk. After this, they managed to get sufficiently near to throw a harpoon with a slip-knot attached; but the rope slid along the soft and elastic body of the mollusk, and was only stopped by the large swimming-fins. They then endeavoured to hoist it on board; but when the greater

part of the body had been got out of the water, the enormous weight of the mass caused the ropes to cut through the flesh, and the creature fell apart, the hinder quarters only remaining in the slip-knot. This was, with difficulty, got on board, and was found to weigh about sixty pounds. Both the officers and sailors of the *Alecto* begged to be allowed to man a boat and attempt once more to bring the creature alongside; but the captain was afraid, lest with its long and powerful arms it might succeed in oversetting the boat and drowning some of the men, and not thinking it right to expose the lives of his crew merely to satisfy a sentiment of curiosity (even although that sentiment had a scientific basis), he gave up the chase, and soon lost sight of the mutilated animal, which seemed to fly from the ship, and to dive below the surface whenever they made towards it. The pursuit of the creature lasted altogether about three hours.

I myself have frequently questioned the Canadian fishermen on the subject of the Cephalopods, and 249 many of them have told me that they have frequently met, in the open sea, with large Cuttle-fish from seven to eight feet long, and which they were afraid to attack. To sum up, it seems impossible to deny that the sea conceals in its profound and immeasurable valleys secrets without number. The Sea-serpent, which appears about once a year, and is described as having the appearance of a number of barrels joined together, may perchance be a Kraken or Cephalopod. What are the Sirens,* —those half-women, half-fish,

* The ancients divided the Sea-woman into two classes,—the Sirens and the Nereids. The Siren is the ancient monster, with the head of a woman and the tail of a fish. They were the daughters of Achelous, and their names were Parthenope, Ligeia, and Leucosia. According to the authors of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even the eighteenth centuries, however, the Sirens were more numerous. In 1614, an English captain named John Smith saw in the West Indies a Siren, the upper part of whose body was formed exactly like that of a woman. She swam away with the utmost possible grace, when he saw her near the shore. Her large eyes were roundish in shape; her nose was well formed, though inclined to be flattish; her eyes were long, but of a good shape; altogether, she seemed a very

pleasant-looking person, and her long tresses gave her a strange appearance, which was not without a certain charm. Unfortunately, however, whilst he was looking at her the lovely bather turned a summersault, and Captain John Smith, who was beginning to be rather smitten, could not help seeing that the lower part of the creature was like that of a fish. It is true that it seemed to be a fish with two tails; but even two tails will scarcely supply the place of a pair of legs.

Dr. Kercher testifies, in a scientific report, that a Siren was captured in the Zuyder Zee, and was dissected at Leyden by Professor Peter Paw; and in the same report he makes mention of a Siren that was found on the Danish coast, and which learnt how to spin and foretell the future. This Siren had a very long tress made of charmed locks. She had an agreeable face, and arms much longer than those of an ordinary man. The fingers of the hands were joined by a membrane so as to resemble a goose's foot; her breasts were round and firm, and her skin was covered with scales so white and so fine that, at a distance, they looked like a perfectly white and smooth skin. She stated that the Tritons and Sirens formed a submarine population, dwelling in caves inaccessible to the diver, and lying on beds of sand, whereon they reposed and lived.*

* Once and for all, I must record it as my opinion that M. Révoil has intended this chapter as a *jeu d'esprit*, or perhaps as a record of human credulity.

Jean-Philippe-Abelinus states, in the first volume of his “Théâtre de l'Europe,” that in the year 1619, some counsellors of the King of Denmark were travelling from Norway to Copenhagen, when they saw a Merman swimming about in the sea with a truss of herbs upon his head. They threw him a bait with a hook concealed, and the Merman, being greedy, took the piece of bacon, and was hauled on board; but directly he reached the deck he began to speak pure Danish, and to threaten the crew with shipwreck. When he began to talk, the sailors were greatly astonished; but when he began to threaten they grew frightened and threw him overboard, making the best apologies they could. 'Tis true

that, as this is the only example of a talking Merman upon record, the commentators of Abelinus declare that he was not a Triton, but a spectre.

Johnston relates that in 1403 a Mermaid was captured in Holland. She allowed herself to be dressed, and accustomed herself to eat bread and milk. She learned how to spin, but remained dumb to the last. Dimas Bosque, the physician to the Viceroy of the Island of Manar, relates, in a letter which appears in Bartholo's “History of Asia,” that one day, as he was walking along the shore with a Jesuit, a band of fishermen came running towards the holy father and entreated him to come to their boat to behold a prodigy; whereupon the Jesuit accepted their invitation; and Dimas Bosque accompanied them. In the boat they found sixteen fishes with human faces (nine females and seven males), which the fishermen had only just caught in their nets. They took them to the shore and examined them closely. Their ears were protrusive like our own, and they were cartilaginous, and covered with a fine skin. Their eyes were exactly like ours as to form, colour, and situation; they were sunk into hollows under eyebrows; they were furnished with eyelids, and were not (as is the case with every other species of fish) furnished with different axes of vision. The nose differed only from the ordinary human nose in that it was slightly flattened like that of a negro. The mouth and lips were exactly similar to our own. The teeth were square, and set close to one another. The breast was large, and covered with a white skin, through which the veins could be seen. The females had round and firm breasts, and were evidently suckling their young; for, on pressing their breasts, a white and very pure milk exuded. Their arms were long, more massive than ours, and without joints. Below the belly, and where the haunches and thighs should commence, there was a tail formed exactly like that of a fish. It will easily be understood that this capture made a great deal of noise. The Viceroy presented most of his friends with a Triton or a Siren, and the residentiary Dutch envoy received for his share a Siren, which he forwarded forthwith to the Museum at the Hague, where it remains to this day, *stuffed.*

250 who, long since set down as fabulous, are in these days half confessed; above all, if we are to place any 251 trust in the account which the celebrated English seaman, George

Anson, gives of that fish in the Philippine Islands which the Spanish have called *peremujer* (almost a woman), and which, he assures us, resemble, in all but their song, the Sirens of the ancients? According to Anson, these fish have immense strength, and, in order to capture them, the natives employ nets made of very strong ropes as thick as the little finger, and when they are caught they kill them with arrows.

The solemn voice of science has not yet pronounced authoritatively with regard to the Kraken or Sea-serpent; but I recollect that, in 1846, happening to be at Newport during the month of August and in the season of sea-bathing, I heard at the *table d'hôte* the captain of a whaler, who had arrived the evening 252 before, declare that off the Island of Nantucket he had struck a Sea-serpent, and that the creature had dived immediately, reappearing at a distance of five or six hundred yards farther on, so that it was entirely visible. According to his account, it was an enormous creature, and although fear prevented the sailors from giving chase to it, they kept it within view with a glass for a considerable time, and at last they lost sight of it in the direction of Cape Cod. This story seemed to me at first to be little better than a hoax, but the Newport journal published it *in extenso* , and the editor announced, in an article specially devoted to the subject, that a steamer was being chartered to go in search of this Sea-serpent, and to capture it if possible.

Naturally a lover of the marvellous, I quitted the hotel and repaired to the office of the newspaper, where I found the editor preparing to start. He was going after the Sea-serpent, and directly I introduced myself, he invited me to accompany him. Of course I was delighted, and accepted the invitation without the slightest hesitation. A quarter of an hour afterwards I was on board the steamer, where I found about a couple of hundred of amateur sportsmen, armed with rifles and other firearms of every calibre and description. Evening had set in, and when we started the horizon was gilded by the setting sun.
An enormous crowd thronged the wharf as we set off under a full press of steam, and everybody wished us 253 good luck. We expected to arrive at Cape Cod by daybreak, and as soon as possible after starting every sporting hero began to make his arrangements for

the night,—in hammocks and bunks, and some upon benches and upon the floors,—just as they could manage.

Gradually the flow of talk grew slower and slower, and all grew still on board. Nothing was to be seen but the binnacle light and the lamps over the paddles. All around was as dark as Erebus. On deck, where I remained to the last with my friend the editor, the darkness was so profound that we could not see two feet before us, so we lighted up our promenade by the light of our cigars. After this we repaired to the state-room, which had been set apart for us, and I went to sleep dreaming of the Sea-serpent and of all the American Reguluses who, in a few hours, were about to dispute with me the honour of the victory. The dawn surprised me filled with these thoughts, and as soon as our toilet could be completed, my friend and I were on deck, with a rifle in one hand and a telescope in the other, sweeping the horizon, which was still veiled in fog.

Gradually the deck became crowded, and nothing was wanted but ladies to render the festivity complete. Two hours passed in dire impatience, and we had not even sighted the smallest cachalot whale, the most diminutive porpoise, or the most insignificant bonito, when suddenly a voice cried out, “I see him! 254 There he is to the nor'rard, by Cape Cod. Look at that moving mass, which looks like a number of barrels fastened together. There he is!”

I must confess that at first I thought it was a hoax. The fantastical stories which certain of the American journals had published occurred to my memory. Nevertheless, I desired nothing but the truth, and, sure enough, with the aid of an excellent glass by Chevalier (which always accompanies me on my sporting expeditions), I certainly did perceive an enormous fish twisting itself into the shape of the letter S on the surface of a comparatively calm sea. Without doubt it was the Kraken, or Sea-serpent: the monster was no longer a myth, but a horrible reality. Our captain made for the creature under a full head of steam, and within a quarter of an hour we had gained upon the Serpent, and could arrive at some approximation as to his shape and length. It was like a monstrous eel, but of great size in

the middle of the body. Its swimming fins were very long, and looked like arms. The head was kept under water, so that we could not distinguish its shape.

When we were about a cannon-shot from the Serpent, one of the sportsmen on board was silly enough to fire his rifle at it, and this bad example was immediately followed by several. In a twinkling the Serpent disappeared, and nothing could be seen but a ripple on the surface of the sea, which rapidly subsided.

255

For five hours did the steamer patrol around Cape Cod, and follow the windings among the islands and reefs about the coasts of Massachusetts, but it was only so much steam thrown away. The Sea-serpent had betaken himself once more to his submarine valleys, where there is peace. As for us, we were fain to find our way back again to Newport. Fortunately, it was two o'clock in the morning when we arrived at the quay, and I was only too glad to discharge my bill at the hotel and make my escape quietly by the railway to Boston. *There* , at any rate, I ran no risk of being chaffed about the Seaserpent which we had *not* caught.

XV.—ANGEL OR DEVIL FISH.

One of the most extraordinary fishes known is the *Diodon* , which is called by certain naturalists, “the Vampire of the Seas,” (*Cephaloptera vampirus*). It is also called both Angel and Devil Fish, and belongs to the family of the Rays.

It frequently measures from twenty to twenty-five feet in length, and at the root of the neck it carries a kind of caudal appendage about six feet long. It is from six to seven feet in circumference, and from 256 three to four feet thick. The shape of the tail is round, like that of a cow; it is as moveable as that of a dog, and is furnished consequently with a contractile membrane. The teeth are, for the most part, very small, and are set into the lower jaw in rows of seven or eight. The whole body of the devil fish is flexible; and one of the most remarkable peculiarities about this fish is, that it carries between its very

prominent eyes a pair of horns, or rather *barbels* , some two or three feet long, which it uses just as an elephant does his trunk, to convey food (such as sea-weeds) into his mouth.

The scales of the devil fish are bright blue, like sapphire, and are arranged like a piece of mosaic. This colour extends from the shoulder to the tail, but the top of the shoulder is nearly black. Three black stripes cross the back, toned gradually down to the whiteness of the belly.

The devil or angel fish leave the depth of the ocean and visit the bays of South Carolina during the months of July, August, and September. They may be seen swimming on the surface and jumping right out of the water by the aid of two large wings or fins, which make them look just like bats. The devil fish are very graceful in their movements, and when they are not wounded are as quiet as lambs. They appear very unexpectedly, and it sometimes happens that when the fisherman has been seeking 257 them in vain he presently finds himself surrounded by a flock of them.

Directly the devil fish is struck with the harpoon it starts away with unequalled rapidity, dragging with it sometimes forty fathom of line and the boat fastened to it. When this happens, the fishermen take other boats in tow. When the fish has been wounded by three or four harpoons, he fights like a very devil, and the volume of water which he scatters about him by his wings or fins is really amazing. The sport is really a dangerous one, and it requires no little skill and nerve to direct the harpoon with a sure hand. The boats used in this style of fishing are usually long and light, and are manned by six or eight rowers. The practice of this fishing is mainly confined to the shores North and South Carolina, where schools of the devil fish appear, numbering from a hundred to a hundred and fifty individuals.

The devil fish is very rare on the French coast, and the capture of one is always made the subject of a wonderful paragraph in one of the local newspapers of Normandy or Brittany.

Some naturalists mention that the devil fish feeds upon the sea-weeds which float about in the waters and upon all kinds of small fry. Their own flesh is not very savoury, but they produce an excellent oil. Marvellous stories are narrated of the immense strength of this fish. VOL. II. S

258

A very favourite place for catching this fish is Bay Point, near Wilmington. There may be seen amateur fishermen, armed with lances and harpoons, embarking in small boats, rowed by three or four niggers, and starting off at high tide after devil fish. The school always advances and retires with the tide, so the great thing is to be with them at the top of the tide. Their movements are as rapid as those of a bird. The most favourable moment for striking is when he has dived to feed on the sea-weed, and is rising to the surface filled and satisfied. When he does not rise quite to the top his presence may be ascertained by a kind of white bubbling of the water, as if it were boiling. When this is seen, the harpooner will sometimes strike his prey at a dozen feet below the surface.

Sometimes the devil fish can be very mischievous. I have myself seen a number of them tear up a row of piles which were driven into a sandy bay in order to keep the shore from drifting, and tow them out to sea. Mr. Stiltman, a planter, who was the owner of the piles, determined to have his revenge, and gave orders to his negroes to launch a fishing boat, in the which he and I and three niggers forthwith embarked.

“Now, Pluto,” cried Stiltman to his best harpooner, “let it be the biggest 'un of the lot.”

“Yes, massa,” said Pluto in reply; “hopes to gib satisfaction to massa and his friend.”

259

In a short time we drew near the fish, and then the oarsmen began to row more gently, until presently they stopped altogether. We were right in the middle of them, and then the agile and skilful Pluto transfixed an enormous fish, which darted off like a horse at full gallop. The line shot out with the rapidity of lightning, and when it was all paid out the boat

was towed rapidly through the water. The devil fish could not get far, so he soon struck upon the sand, and after a fierce struggle yielded himself up upon the shore, where, in spite of all his resistance, we soon managed to put an end to him. This fish measured eighteen feet from head to tail. His barbels were over three feet long, and he looked altogether a most repulsive monster. This was the first specimen of a devil fish I had ever been close to.

Next day, we resumed the fishing, Mr. Stiltman having received intelligence of the arrival of eight devil fish which had appeared off Hilton Head. Pluto once more accompanied us. When we arrived at the place, to our great disappointment the surface of the sea was as smooth as glass. Presently, however, Pluto exclaimed, “Dere he be, the big debbil;” and there, sure enough, in the middle of the bay was a tremendous fish raising his back above the water, and looking very like a rock which had been suddenly raised above the sea by some volcanic action. I entreated Mr. Stiltman to allow me to try my hand with the harpoon, to s 2 260 which he readily consented, although Pluto handed me the murderous weapon with evident reluctance. The first time I threw, I missed the fish for all effectual purposes, and only struck him on the tail. He was soon at the top again, gambolling around our boat as if he felt no damage, whereupon Pluto, with a grim smile upon his thick lips, hauled in the harpoon and re-coiled the line in the boat. Once more I took my place, determined not to deserve any longer the ridicule of my black friend. Waiting for a favourable moment, I darted the harpoon at the monster, which immediately dived.

“Missed again!” cried Mr. Stiltman.

“Oh! no. See there,” I replied, pointing to the line rapidly running out, and off started the devil fish for a good two miles' cruise seaward, dragging us after him. On a sudden he stopped, and, as he was in all probability dead by this time, we began to tow him to shore, and in a short time we had the cable fast on land which was to pull him out of the water, when, just as we were all ready for a long and strong pull, we felt a tremendous shock on the line. He was still alive, and made a tremendous fight for it; but eventually we pulled

him on shore, and made an end of him. He was not so large as that which Pluto had caught, but he was not less than fifteen feet long, and so it was not a bad harpoon throw for a novice. When we turned him over we found half a dozen sucking-fishes, or *Remoza* (commonly 261 called pilot-fishes) attached to the devil's belly; whereupon Pluto and Mr. Stiltman explained to me that these parasites frequent the schools of devil fish, and live upon the remains which the larger fish leave behind.

A few days after this, Mr. Stiltman (who is one of the most zealous fishermen I ever met with, either in the Old World or the New), invited me once more to go after some devil fish which had appeared in the neighbourhood. They had been seen by a black who was coming home from crab and oyster fishing for his master's table, and they were close at hand. We were not long in starting, and in ten minutes our bow was well aimed at a dozen splendid devil fish who were gambolling about within half a mile of shore. The weather was rather foggy, but the sun did its best to penetrate the gauzy veils which hung around. Presently, however, we found ourselves enveloped in one of those thick fog-banks which envelope you completely, and as, unfortunately, we had no compass on board, we had no idea in what direction to find the shore. Of course we had quite lost sight of the devil fish, and as we were thinking just then much more of our own safety than of catching fish, I really don't think we should have struck one had he come alongside.

On the shores of North Carolina, a cold fog of this kind is usually the precursor of a storm, and our only prudent course was to get to shore as quickly 262 as possible. Mr. Stiltman and Pluto took counsel together, and tried every means of ascertaining the true direction. After hesitating for a moment, Mr. Stiltman put the boat about, and the two blacks began rowing their best. We seemed now to be all right When, just as we were indulging in the pleasantest dreams of security, a monster of tremendous size and strength, puffing and blowing with enormous power and displacing a large bulk of water, came rushing upon us. Closer and closer it came until Stiltman cried out, “Lost! lost! It's a steamer upon us, and they're running us right down!” I shut my eyes, expecting instant dissolution, but as the huge body glided past our prow and swamped us, the captain of the steamer being a

humane man, put the vessel about and we were soon on board enjoying a tumbler of hot grog and a dry change of clothes. This was all very well, but the reader may imagine our dismay at learning that the steamer was bound for the Havana.

“Surely,” quoth Mr. Stiltman, “you stop on your way?”

“At Key-West,” was the reply.

“That will do; I'll get ashore there. And pray, what may be the name of your steamer, cap'en?”

“The *Devil Fish* ,” answered Captain Danielson.

“The devil it is,” quoth Stiltman. “Well, I did think the devil fishes of Hilton Head were my greatest enemies, but now one has saved my life.”

263

XVI.—THE BLIND GUDGEONS OF THE MAMMOTH CAVES OF KENTUCKY.

North America , a country where nature affects proportions which belong not only to the sublime but almost to the impossible, had no marvel more extraordinary than the Falls of Niagara when, in 1840, certain miners, who were engaged in excavating nitre from one of the numerous eaves in the State of Kentucky, found themselves wandering about among their inexplorable sinuosities, and were shut up there for seventy hours without being able to find their way out. These were the daring explorers who discovered the Mammoth Caves, and it is in the Mammoth Caves that the blind gudgeons are found.

I first heard of these fish from three of the most charming ladies of Lexington, who proposed to conduct me on an excursion to the Mammoth Caves. Mr. Rush (the husband of one of them) arranged all the details of the party and superintended the pre. parations, and next morning at day-break we started from Rush's Bee-Hive (as he called his countryhouse), and soon found ourselves skirting the base of the Cumberland Mountains

and the sinuous banks of Green River, until we came to the opening of the 264 Mammoth Caves, among a number of gray and bare limestone rocks. There is a splendid hotel in the vicinity, furnished with taste, and offering every comfort and accommodation to the traveller. The opening into the caves is within a very short distance of the hotel. A limpid stream of water noiselessly percolates down the rock and disappears in a kind of basin below.

I pass over many of the curiosities which render those vast natural caverns so remarkable. One of the passages is called Audubon's Avenue. Its walls are polished like marble, and it is rather more than a mile long. At the farther end is a well or pond, about twenty-five feet deep, filled with water as clear as crystal. Returning, we found a passage called the Great Gallery, which is a large tunnel measuring some eighteen yards in height and width, and leading to Kentucky Cliffs—so called from the resemblance which they bear to the perpendicular banks which border the Kentucky River. Descending at once by about twenty steps, we found ourselves in a kind of hall, which was more like a church in which five thousand people could be collected, than anything else. Beyond this, there is the largest saltpetre mine in the world, and, a little way on, the Gothic Avenue.

This led us to other places of interest in the Mammoth Caves, all of which we examined carefully. We dined at the foot of the cataract, where there 265 is a convenient place for that purpose, on the repast which our host had provided for us; and that ceremony concluded we began once more our exploration of the Mammoth Caves. In answer to a question which I addressed to Mr. Edmund Rush with regard to the blind fish, he told me that we had yet many hours to pass in the caves before reaching the lake where they were to be found.

After a time, we reached the Temple, which is a circular grotto, much larger than that of Antiparos, and here it is where the travellers who undertake to explore these giant caves usually pass the night. For this purpose, we had brought with us some hammocks, which

were soon slung from staples firmly fixed in the walls of the Temple, and we all sought the comfort of repose.

We were all up again next morning at six o'clock, enjoying the coffee and breakfast which had been prepared, and pressed onwards to the other wonders of the caves. In one of them we found a cataract called the Maëlstrom, a subterranean whirlpool, the waters of which flow none knows whither. One of our guides related to us a stirring anecdote of a young man from Louisville who had explored the depths of the hole in which the whirlpool was, and had barely escaped with life. Hence we passed along Pentico Avenue, and so on by the Bunch of Pineapples (a splendid mass of stalagmites), the Zig-zags, and the Bandit's Halt, until we came to the lake in which 266 the blind gudgeons were to be found. This lake is more than three hundred yards below the surface of the earth, and is justly considered to be one of the wonders of the world.

This vast subterranean Dead Sea seems to have no tide or current, but its waters are doubtless supplied and renewed from some invisible source. There was a boat, into which we entered, bearing torches in our hand and looking very like the passengers whom Charon ferries over the infernal Styx. We had with us a square net with a pocket in the centre, and at three dips, without any difficulty, we landed over two hundred gudgeons exactly like those of our rivers, with this exception, that they have no eyes. I took several of these fish into my hands to examine them, and was amazed at the eccentricity of Nature in thus peopling this subterranean lake with a fish deprived of a sense which would be useless to it in these darksome regions.

Our guides soon lit a fire, and with the aid of a frying-pan and some butter, cooked the blind gudgeons, and we found them most excellent and savoury. (One peculiarity about these *Dead Sea* gudgeons is that they won't keep long; they go bad a few hours after they are caught.) This done, we proceeded to explore the rest of the wonders of the Mammoth Caves, and managed to finish our task before the sun was set. The sight of the glorious luminary as we emerged from the regions of darkness, 267 dazzled us all, and although

none of us regretted the time which we had passed in the bowels of the earth, no one (the guides excepted) wished to recommence the journey. We found excellent accommodation at the Mammoth Caves' Hotel, and were soon enjoying a good dinner, and congratulating each other upon having come safe and sound out of the mighty caverns.

These vast caves are indeed unequalled in the world. They form a construction unspoiled by the hand of man. They contain two hundred and twenty-six passages, forty-seven large caves or halls, eight waterfalls, three lakes, and twenty-two streams and rivers. They do not, however, harbour any noxious creatures, and the air is so pure that decomposition never takes place in them. The temperature of Grant's Grotto (winter and summer) is fifty degrees of Fahrenheit.

XVII.—THE ALLIGATORS OF LOUISIANA AND TEXAS.

North America , with its impenetrable forests, its fertile prairies, its profound lakes, its lofty mountains, its cataracts and rivers, is certainly one of the richest and most picturesque countries on the face 268 of the globe. So varied are its marvels that it is difficult to decide which is most worthy of admiration. For my part, I know nothing to compare with the Mississippi* river, and I think my readers will agree with me when they come to understand the prodigious fecundity which it spreads over the valley which it waters, and the immensity of the space which it covers.

* The name Mississippi is a corruption of that which the Indians gave to this river, and which has been poetically translated “the Father of Rivers.” I think, however, that the literal translation is more expressive. The word is derived from two Chocktaw words, *Missah* and *Sippah*, signifying *old, large, and strong*. The Chocktaws once occupied nearly the whole extent of the banks, and tribes of them are still scattered about Ohio and the Floridas.

Almost every country which is traversed by the Mississippi is an alluvium, consisting of black virgin soil which seems only to await the hand of the cultivator. Not a stone can be found anywhere. This character of the soil renders the river extremely sinuous, and

frequently it will burst all bounds, and find a shorter way for itself across some bend which it has previously hollowed out. Thus it happens that the course of the river changes frequently, that considerable tracts of land are submerged and destroyed, and that villages which were once upon the right bank of the river are now upon the left.

The mighty current of the river, as it sweeps over those submerged lands, bears upon its surface the trunks of enormous trees, the relics of some ancient 269 forest which it has torn up in its passage, and which dance upon it as if they were so many straws. Sometimes these collect together in a bend of the river, and becoming interlaced, pass by the name of rafts. Others get fixed into the bottom and, under the name of “snags,” are among the most formidable perils of river navigation in America.

The extent of the Mississippi surpasses all belief. It rises in the regions of sempiternal snow, and flows into lands where the heat is almost unbearable. It passes through every variety of climate, and receives as mere tributaries those four great rivers—the Arkansas, the Red River, the Ohio and the Missouri, the length of which, and of their numerous affluents, amount altogether to more than three thousand miles. All these mighty masses of water are received into the Gulf of Mexico, through the dozen outlets which form the mouths of the Mississippi, three of which are deep enough to float ships of the line.

One morning I was travelling down the Mississippi, from Natchez to Baton Rouge, on board one of those floating mansions which they call steam-boats, when, just as we were approaching the Red River, my eyes fell upon the first alligator I had ever seen in my life. Contrary to the habit of these creatures, he looked very clean, and was running along a sand-bank in the sun, as if to dry his scaly hide.

270

On seeing the creature I uttered a cry of surprise, and in answer to a question which my exclamation drew forth, I said, “That's a crocodile.”

“Not so,” replied my interlocutor. “It's an alligator. They're common enough here in every corner of the river.”

My companion then proceeded to explain to me that in former times the Red River and the Arkansas were peopled with myriads of alligators. Two causes had however conspired to render them less numerous than before: the steamers have frightened them away and also the birds and fishes on which they fed. Moreover, there was a prevalent fashion some years ago only to use saddles and boots made of alligators' hide. Of late years people have got to understand that alligators' leather is far less water-proof than that of oxen and horses, and the demand for it has consequently lessened.

“You seem to know all about alligators, my friend,” said I, “and I'll be bound for it you have made them an object of special study.”

“Well, you're not far wrong there. I've spent a goodish time in studying the tarnal critters, and I know pretty well all their ways.”

He then proceeded to inform me that the alligators' nests were usually constructed on the banks of streams, and were surrounded with reeds and the roots of trees. The female lays in this muddy hole fifty to sixty eggs, as big as turkey's eggs, which she 271 covers with reeds and mud, and builds up over the centre a cone of puddled clay, which is so strong that you may walk upon it without breaking it. These eggs take about thirty or forty days to hatch out, and during the process of incubation, the female never quits her nest except to seek for food. At this time she is very dangerous to whoever interferes with her. As soon as the eggs are hatched, the young caymans sport about as lively as lizards, and their mother cleans them by licking them with her rough and scaly tongue. Alligators seek their food only at night, and they are most fond of turtles, tortoises, frogs, birds and young peccaries. They will hunt after these when they come to drink at the banks frequented by alligators. In the water, the alligator is agile enough; but on land, his short legs refuse to support his long tail and heavy body. He drags himself along, therefore, rather than walks,

and his tail ploughs up a long furrow in the mud as he goes. The alligator when in the water and in the middle of a lake or river, has no fear. He can dive and make his escape as he pleases; but on shore, directly he hears the slightest warning of attack, whether from man or beast, he makes towards the water and, when pressed closely, crouches upon the ground and remains perfectly motionless. If the enemy approaches, he seems to pluck up a courage and to show fight, and when thus seen, with his jaws furnished with a double row of sharp teeth 272 he looks an awkward customer; but if you manage to avoid the tail of the alligator there is little danger. This is his most powerful weapon for attack and defence. It is only the negroes who have anything to fear from the alligator's tooth.* No one seems to have explained the reason, but the flesh of the coloured man seems always preferable to the monsters of the deep. The negroes hold them in great aversion, and lay traps of all kinds to catch them. One of these is a kind of grappling made of four branches of trees, with about thirty yards of line attached, furnished with a strong hook and a lump of peccary's meat. When this is arranged and the bait floating on the top of the water, a negro takes an earthenware plate or piece of turtle shell and begins to beat it in cadence with a hammer. As soon as he hears this, the alligator pops his head out of the water, and advances gradually and cautiously towards his prey. Little by little, however, he grows bolder, makes a dash at the bait and finds that he is caught.

* It is believed in America that the alligator is only to be dreaded by the white man at the breeding season. The males then engage in terrific fights, and their audacity with regard to men largely increases. This also is the season when the natural food of the alligator is scarcer than at any other,—a circumstance which, of course, tends to render him more ferocious and ravenous.

All this was very novel and interesting information for me, and before reaching Baton Rouge I had arranged with my new friend, the trapper, to spend 273 a week or so in the neighbourhood. Accordingly, the very next day, Mr. Salters (that was his name) and myself made our preparations, and started on our adventures.

It was evening when we reached a creek of the Mississippi, in which we could see myriads of fish playing about. Our dogs flushed plenty of water-fowl, which fell to our repeated shots, when suddenly one of them began to howl, and putting his tail between his legs, made away from the water as fast as he could. On this, my companion pointed out to me with his gun an enormous alligator crouched down into the mud, and watching us with lack-lustre eyes. Without exchanging a word, we both fired our double-barrels, and there, for the first time, laid this new species of game dead before me, with his jaws gaping, and spreading around a faint odour of musk. A negro, who attended us as porter, carried him down to the canoe, and his skin even now adorns the walls of a sugar-bakery belonging to a rich planter on the Mississippi, to whom my friend and myself presented it.

Next day, when Mr. Salters and myself were on one of the lagoons of the Red River, we were witnesses of a tremendous battle between a female alligator and a large eagle. The alligator was defending its young from the bird of prey, and the spectacle was most artistic, as the mother did her best to defend her young, which crouched under her belly until VOL. II. T 274 nothing could be seen of them but just the tips of their tails on the surface of the water. When the fight was at its fiercest, it was suddenly interrupted by a double explosion. The eagle fell with one wing wounded, and my companion and myself soon put an end to its misery on the bank. Meanwhile, the alligator and its scaly progeny took advantage of the opportunity to conceal themselves among the reedy margins of the lagoon.

Since this expedition with Mr. Salters, I have frequently found myself in the marshes of Louisiana, and have met with alligators by hundreds with no better weapon about me than a stick,* and if by chance I had a gun about me, and, for mere idleness, took a shot at one of the creatures, the others would dive down on the instant and reappear shortly, very little alarmed at the noise.

* Audubon states that an Alligator may be easily met with a stick; but I must confess, with all due humility, that I never attempted a duel of this kind. The cattle drivers and muleteers sometimes have to defend their charges in crossing swamps where alligators abound, and

seldom need to have recourse, to fire-arms. A long stick is usually found sufficient to drive away the most formidable alligator that ever snapped at a horse or an ox.

The negroes in the Southern States, who are of a very playful disposition, sometimes amuse themselves by inflating pig's bladders, and throwing them into water which is known to be infested by alligators. It is most amusing to witness the attempts of the creatures to seize hold of the light and buoyant 275 objects, which seem to baffle every endeavour to seize them. Closely-corked bottles are sometimes thrown for the same purpose, and when the alligator seizes one of these in his formidable jaws and crushes it up, the water is reddened with his blood.

I have seen the negroes capture the alligator with a lasso just as if he were a wild bull or horse, and I had even heard (upon reliable authority) of their being blown up by means of a tin box of gunpowder, (which they had swallowed in a bait) and an electric spark,—an experiment which I was determined one day to try.

During the very hot season the alligators take refuge in the rivers, and the fishermen withdraw their nets in the morning in fear lest they find an alligator among its meshes. As soon as the cold season approaches, the alligators ensconce themselves among the roots of the trees, or bury themselves in the mud to avoid the cold. The negroes catch large numbers of them in winter, and boil them down for the sake of the oil which they contain.

On the Texan coasts and about Lake Sabine there are vast salt marshes (including a large district called the *Shaking Prairie* *), where alligators abound, and

* This prairie, which occupies a considerable space in Louisiana and a great deal of Texas, is caused by a law of nature, which is very analagous to that which causes the Artesian wells, only it is water that works in the one case and earth in the other. The water falls into the depths of the Artesian well, and springs up under the pressure of the strata to which it is subjected. In like manner, the Shaking Prairie is forced up by the dynamic action of the soil. Within twenty miles of New Orleans is a prairie as vast in extent as the State of

Delaware. This district is inhabited by negroes who have escaped from Jamaica and the West Indies, and who live there very comfortably. Here and there, around an Indian hut, may be found a clump of oaks like an oasis, and if it were not for the action of the soil, the prairie of Louisiana would tremble no more, and the harvests would be better and better every year.

276 where they grow to a size elsewhere unknown. Here you may see these enormous brutes stretched out in the sun and displaying their proportions as if they were perfectly at home.

One day I happened to be on the shore in a tavern, and near a landing-stage where a boat called for New Orleans, and there I met with a hunter named Allen, a man who lived on the Angolina River, and who came every year, from November to April, to employ his time in the catching of alligators. This Indian Nimrod had companion named Jim, who was of the Bolaxis tribe. Jim was a better sportsman than his master, for he never needed anything but a lasso and a bowie-knife to get the better of an alligator. If he saw an alligator, he crawled cautiously towards him and lassoed him, and soon put an end to him with his bowie-knife. One morning, I met Allen on the edge of a ditch skinning an alligator, which was not less than eighteen feet long, and I halted on my way to take a little breakfast with the party. As I was enjoying my cup of coffee and venison steak, I asked my companions a few questions as to their 277 employment, and finished by asking whether the alligator which they had just skinned was not one of the heaviest which they had ever met with. They answered that it was a good one for the neighbourhood, but nothing for the Big Marshes.

“And where are they?” said I.

“Oh! they're not very far. Only down there,” said he, pointing down river. He then spun me a tremendous yarn respecting the alligators which he had to do with in that part of the

Mississippi, and in his adventures with which he had narrowly escaped being swallowed up by them.

Here is my last adventure with the alligators, and I give the reader my word of honour that it is strictly true. I had often met a negro who lived on the border of Devil's Swamp, not far from New Orleans, and who got his living by selling spirituous liquors. Miro had four barrels in his cellar,—one of wine, another of gin, a third of brandy, and a fourth of rum. He had, moreover, ten well-built fishing-boats, and eked out a very good living by serving gentlemen who came that way with a very passable pepper-pot, or a capital venison steak, or a peccary ham. He was a bit of a braggart in his way, and had often recounted adventures which had piqued my curiosity. Among other things he had frequently told me of the effect of the *Electric Telegraph* upon on alligator.

At this time there was only one sportsman in New 278 Orleans who had the apparatus necessary for producing the electric spark. This was a man named Dantonnet, the first violoncello in the French theatre there, and a very zealous hunter after the alligators. I subsequently discovered the connexion between his zeal for sport and his fondness for music. He had discovered that the entrails of the alligator make the most flexible and sonorous strings for a musical instrument in the world, therefore he hunted them.

One morning I started with M. Dantonnet, his apparatus, wires, and all the rest of it. He was followed by a nigger carrying a large deal box, a carpet-bag, and a gun. I had already got on board the boat which was to convey us to Devil's Swamp all that I required, and we soon floated up on the top of the rising tide. We started at four o'clock in the morning, on a fine day of March, and arrived at Miro's hut about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. It was a charming and picturesque little cottage, and after we had enjoyed a very hearty breakfast, my friend Dantonnet made preparations for his great experiment. They were as simple as possible. There was a tin case, holding about three pounds of powder, and this was sewn up into the belly of the fowl that was to serve for the bait. A wire, about the eighth of an inch in diameter, connected the tin case with the shore.

Dantonnet cried out “All right!” and, the bait being thrown overboard, we rowed out into the open. 279 After a time, we felt a slight shock upon the line, and then a convulsion which shook the whole boat. Presently it was clear that the prey had swallowed the bait, and then our fisherman, who had in his custody the box which contained the electric telegraph, connected the wires. The effect was tremendous, for, after a terrible shock, we had hurled over our heads the throbbing remains of an enormous alligator, mingled with a rain of water and blood. The battery had done its work, and my friend Dantonnet received from every spectator the applause due for having hit his mark.

Once more was the experiment repeated, and in the evening we returned to Miro's hut to enjoy a young boar-pig roasted whole, with a most savoury stuffing inside. This we enjoyed thoroughly, and also a stew, or *gumbo* , made of all sorts of materials, game, fish, fowl, meat, &c., with all manner of spice and flavours; and when the hour of repose arrived Miro pointed out to us two hammocks which were slung beneath the trees, and in which we slept the sleep of the just.

Next morning, at day-break, we returned to New Orleans, and that very evening Dantonnet's fiddlestick was as active as ever.

THE END.

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